LHS English 9 Unit 4

Content Area: **ELA**
Course(s):
Time Period: **MP3**
Length:
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

Theme: Shakespeare and the Equations of Fate

Benchmark Text Focus: Literature

Anchor Text: Romeo and Juliet

Writing Genre Focus: Narrative Writing

Targeted ELA Standards

Add the appropriate **NJSLS ELA** standards with which this unit aligns. This is done by clicking "actions" and then "add standards".

L.SS.9–10.1	Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
L.SS.9–10.1.A	Use parallel structure.
L.SS.9–10.1.B	Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.
L.SS.9–10.1.C	Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.
L.SS.9–10.1.D	Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.
L.SS.9–10.1.E	Recognize spelling conventions.
L.KL.9–10.2	Apply knowledge of language to make effective choices for meaning, or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading, writing, speaking or listening.
L.KL.9–10.2.A	Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.
L.KL.9–10.2.B	Vary word choice and sentence structure to demonstrate an understanding of the influence of language.
L.KL.9–10.2.C	Demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word

	or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
L.VL.9–10.3	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
L.VL.9–10.3.A	Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
L.VL.9–10.3.B	Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy).
L.VL.9–10.3.C	Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
L.VL.9–10.3.D	Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, or its etymology.
L.VL.9–10.3.E	Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
L.VI.9–10.4	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings, including connotative meanings.
L.VI.9–10.4.A	Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.
L.VI.9–10.4.B	Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.
L.VI.9–10.4.C	Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone; how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
RL.CR.9–10.1	Cite a range of thorough textual evidence and make relevant connections to strongly support analysis of multiple aspects of what a literary text says explicitly and inferentially, as well as including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
RI.CR.9–10.1	Cite a range and thorough textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections, to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly and inferentially, as well as interpretations of the text.
RL.CI.9–10.2	Determine one or more themes of a literary text and analyze how it is developed and refined over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
RI.CI.9–10.2	Determine one or more central ideas of an informational text and analyze how it is developed and refined over the course of a text, including how it emerges and is shaped by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.IT.9–10.3	Analyze how an author unfolds and develops ideas throughout a text, including how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
RI.IT.9–10.3	Analyze how an author unfolds ideas throughout the text, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
RL.TS.9–10.4	Analyze how an author's choices concerning the structure of a text, order of the events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulation of time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create specific effects (e.g., mystery, tension, or surprise).
RL.PP.9–10.5	Determine an author's lens in a text (including cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature) and analyze how an author uses rhetorical devices to advance a point of view.
RL.MF.9–10.6	Analyze, integrate, and evaluate multiple interpretations (e.g., recorded or live production of a play or recorded novel or poetry) of a single text or text/s presented in different

	formats (visually, quantitatively).
RL.CT.9–10.8	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) how an author draws on, develops, or transforms source material historical and literary significance (e.g., how a modern author treats a theme or topic from mythology or a religious text) and how they relate in terms of themes and significant concepts.
W.NW.9–10.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
W.NW.9–10.3.A	Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
W.NW.9–10.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
W.NW.9–10.3.C	Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
W.NW.9–10.3.D	Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
W.NW.9–10.3.E	Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
W.WP.9–10.4	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach; sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out feedback and reflecting on personal writing progress; consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
W.RW.9–10.7	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
SL.PE.9–10.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
SL.PE.9–10.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
SL.PE.9–10.1.B	Collaborate with peers to set rules for discussions (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views); develop clear goals and assessment criteria (e.g., student developed rubric) and assign individual roles as needed.
SL.PE.9–10.1.C	Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
SL.PE.9–10.1.D	Respond thoughtfully to various perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and justify own views. Make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
SL.PI.9–10.4	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
SL.UM.9–10.5	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
SL.AS.9–10.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English.

Rationale

William Shakespeare's works have had a profound impact on literature, language, and culture, making him one of the most influential writers in history. This unit, "Exploring Shakespeare and Informative Writing," aims to introduce students to the timeless themes, rich language, and dramatic techniques found in Shakespeare's plays while also developing their skills in writing informative texts.

Why Study Shakespeare?

1. Cultural and Literary Significance: Shakespeare's plays and sonnets are foundational to English literature. Studying his works allows students to understand literary history and recognize his influence on storytelling, character development, and the English language.

2. Universal Themes: Shakespeare explores universal themes such as love, power, jealousy, and identity, which remain relevant today. Analyzing these themes helps students connect with the texts and consider their own experiences and perspectives.

3. Language and Expression: Shakespeare's use of language is both complex and beautiful. Engaging with his work enhances students' vocabulary and understanding of poetic and dramatic techniques, enriching their overall communication skills.

This unit invites students into one of the most enduring questions in literature: to what extent are our lives shaped by forces beyond our control — fate, circumstance, family, timing — versus the choices we make within them? Using Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* as the anchor text, students will examine how the play constructs fate as an active dramatic force (through the Chorus's framing, dramatic irony, omens, and the tragic chain of coincidence and impulsive choice), while also considering the ways the characters' own decisions accelerate the tragedy the play claims is inevitable.

The unit culminates in a narrative essay in which students craft an original story exploring the tension between fate and choice, drawing on the structural and thematic techniques Shakespeare uses to build inevitability, tension, and consequence into a narrative.

The benchmark features the Babylonian story of two lovers named Pyramus and Thisbe. The work connects thematically to "Romeo and Juliet" and it predates Shakespeare's writing and was likely source material for the playwright. The writing allows students to practice the narrative skill they learned in this unit in order to describe the connection between the two stories, "Romeo and Juliet" and "Pyramus and Thisbe".

Enduring Understandings

Content Specific	Skills Specific
▪ **Importance of Language:** Students will understand that Shakespeare's use of language — including techniques like metaphor, allusion, and rhetorical questioning — is not only a tool for artistic expression but also a	▪ **Analyzing Language and Rhetorical Devices:** Students will develop the ability to identify and analyze rhetorical devices in Shakespeare's text, understanding how these techniques shape characters' emotions,

means of exploring human emotion, relationships, and the characters' struggle to understand or control their own fates. Additionally, students will understand how Shakespeare's use of iambic pentameter and other rhythmic structures in *Romeo and Juliet* serves to elevate dialogue, highlighting emotional conflicts and thematic elements such as love, fate, and tragedy — and building the sense of momentum and inevitability that drives the play toward its tragic conclusion.

- **Conveying Universal Human Experiences:** Students will recognize that the themes of *Romeo and Juliet* — such as the tension between love and hate, the power of fate, and the tragic consequences of impulsive decisions — are expressed through both the structure of the play and the characters' dialogue. In studying character dialogue, students will analyze how the way characters speak — whether in prose or verse — reveals their emotional state, social status, and personal conflicts, and how these choices of language build the complex, multidimensional nature of characters like Romeo, Juliet, and Mercutio, whose individual decisions repeatedly intersect with — and accelerate — the fate the play announces from its opening lines.

- **Exploring Fate, Choice, and Consequence in Dramatic Structure:** Students will explore how Shakespeare builds a sense of fate and inevitability through structural techniques — the Prologue's direct announcement of the tragic ending, dramatic irony, omens, and a compressed timeline — while also showing how individual characters' choices (impulsivity, pride, haste, secrecy) actively drive the plot toward that ending. Students will learn that compelling narratives, like Shakespeare's play, often work by balancing a sense of inevitable consequence with believable human choice, so that a story's ending feels both surprising and, in retrospect, earned.

- **Narrative Writing Creation:** Students will learn that constructing a compelling narrative relationships, and attempts to persuade or influence one another. This skill supports narrative writing by showing students how carefully chosen language can reveal a character's motivations and inner conflict, techniques they can incorporate into their own storytelling.

- **Understanding the Rhythm and Structure of Shakespeare's Verse:** By understanding the rhythm of Shakespeare's language, students will learn how form affects meaning. This skill empowers students to analyze how the rhythm of language impacts a scene's emotional tone and sense of momentum toward the play's tragic ending, which they can incorporate into their own narrative writing through deliberate pacing and sentence rhythm.

- **Developing a Clear and Purposeful Narrative Arc:** Students will learn how to craft a clear narrative arc — establishing a central tension, rising action, climax, and resolution — that gives their story a sense of purpose and direction. By analyzing *Romeo and Juliet*, they will practice identifying how Shakespeare structures the play's arc around competing forces (e.g., love vs. fate, impulse vs. consequence) and apply similar structural choices to their own original narratives.

- **Using Textual Evidence and Craft Techniques as Models:** This skill will help students identify specific moments, lines, and dramatic techniques in *Romeo and Juliet* — such as foreshadowing, dramatic irony, or symbolic imagery — and analyze how these techniques create tension and meaning. Students will practice drawing on these models as inspiration and evidence for the craft decisions in their own narrative writing.

- **Structuring a Narrative Logically and Cohesively:** Students will learn how to organize their narratives clearly, sequencing events so that cause and consequence are evident to the reader, much as Shakespeare structures the escalating events of *Romeo and Juliet* across its five acts. This organizational skill is crucial for building a story in which each event logically and believably leads to

requires deliberate plot structure and pacing — building tension, foreshadowing consequence, and creating a believable escalation of events — much as Shakespeare does across the five acts of *Romeo and Juliet*. They will apply these techniques to craft original narratives exploring the tension between fate and choice, developing characters whose decisions and flaws (not simply external circumstance) drive the story's events, and using literary devices such as symbolism, foreshadowing, and dramatic irony to give their narratives depth and thematic resonance.

- **Analyzing through Different Critical Lenses:** Students will understand that there are multiple ways to interpret *Romeo and Juliet*, including through historical, feminist, psychoanalytic, and sociological lenses, and that considering these different perspectives deepens their understanding of how the characters' fates are shaped by both personal choice and the social and historical forces surrounding them — an understanding students can then draw on to add complexity and nuance to their own narrative writing.

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- **Developing Complex, Multidimensional Characters:** Students will develop the skill of recognizing how a character's choices, flaws, and motivations (such as Romeo's impulsivity or Juliet's defiance) drive a narrative forward, and will apply this understanding to create their own characters whose decisions — not simply external circumstance — shape the events of their stories.

- **Crafting Purposeful and Resonant Endings:** Students will practice writing narrative endings that bring their story's central tension to a meaningful resolution, echoing how *Romeo and Juliet*'s tragic ending reflects on the themes the play develops throughout. They will also learn how to use language effectively to end their narrative with emotional and thematic impact.

- **Analyzing Characterization through Language:** By analyzing how Shakespeare uses language to develop characters, students will build skills in identifying character motivations and interpreting how dialogue reflects the play's major themes. This understanding allows students to use similar techniques — revealing character through dialogue, word choice, and voice — in developing the characters of their own narratives.

- **Voice and Tone in Narrative Writing:** Students will learn how to establish a consistent and purposeful voice and tone in their narrative writing, balancing emotional depth with narrative clarity. They will understand how Shakespeare's use of language to evoke emotion in the audience can inform their own choices in creating mood and atmosphere within a story.

- **Refining Writing Through Revision and Peer Feedback:** This skill helps students refine their narratives by focusing on clarity, pacing, and the coherence of plot and character development. By practicing revision techniques, students will learn to strengthen their storytelling and produce a more

	polished, purposeful final narrative.

Essential Questions

Content Specific	Skills Specific
• How does Shakespeare's use of language and rhetorical devices influence the themes and characters in Romeo and Juliet? • In what ways does the rhythm and structure of Shakespeare's verse deepen the emotional impact and thematic significance of Romeo and Juliet, particularly its building sense of fate and inevitability? • How does Shakespeare develop characters through their use of language and the rhythm of their speech in Romeo and Juliet? • What role do the themes of love, conflict, and fate play in Romeo and Juliet, and how does Shakespeare use language to express these themes? • How does the play balance a sense of fate or inevitability with the consequences of individual characters' choices, and how can this tension be seen as a driving force in the play's structure? • What is the role of inevitability versus choice in shaping a story's outcome, and how can we balance both when crafting an original narrative inspired by Romeo and Juliet? • How can different critical lenses (e.g., historical, feminist, psychoanalytic) enhance our interpretation of Romeo and Juliet, and how can these lenses inform the choices we make in writing our own narratives? • Why is the development of a clear narrative arc and logical sequencing important for storytelling, and how can this structure be applied when crafting a narrative inspired by Romeo and Juliet? • How does developing complex, multidimensional characters — whose choices and flaws drive the plot — strengthen a narrative, as seen in Romeo and Juliet and in our own original stories?	▪ How does Shakespeare's use of rhetorical devices (such as metaphor, irony, and rhetorical questions) influence the meaning and emotional impact of the dialogue in Romeo and Juliet? • How does the rhythm and structure of Shakespeare's verse, particularly iambic pentameter, contribute to the emotional intensity and thematic depth of Romeo and Juliet, and how can attention to rhythm and pacing strengthen our own narrative writing? • Why is it important to develop a clear and purposeful narrative arc, and how can you ensure that your story's central tension is both focused and compelling when crafting a narrative inspired by Romeo and Juliet? • How do you select and effectively incorporate craft techniques from Romeo and Juliet — such as foreshadowing, dramatic irony, or symbolism — as models for building tension and meaning in your own narrative? • How can you organize your narrative logically to ensure a clear progression of events and a satisfying build toward your story's climax, as Shakespeare does across the five acts of Romeo and Juliet? • Why is it important to develop believable character motivations and conflicts, and how can you use choices and flaws — as Shakespeare does with Romeo, Juliet, and Mercutio — to drive the events of your own narrative? • What role does the ending play in a narrative, and how can you craft a conclusion that brings your story's central tension to a meaningful and resonant close, in the way Romeo and Juliet's ending reflects on its major themes? • How does Shakespeare use language to

• How does the integration of vivid detail, symbolism, and foreshadowing strengthen a narrative, particularly one exploring themes of fate and consequence like those in Romeo and Juliet?	develop complex characters in Romeo and Juliet, and how can analyzing these techniques strengthen the characters you create in your own narrative writing? • How can you use voice, tone, and mood to enhance your narrative writing, and what strategies can you apply from Shakespeare's language to engage your reader effectively? • How can you refine your narrative through revision and peer feedback to strengthen your plot, clarify character development, and improve the overall impact of your story?

Key Resources

Anchor Text: Romeo & Juliet by William Shakespeare - No Fear Shakespeare Edition (hard copy) and Folger edition (PDF)

Romeo and Juliet "My Shakespeare" website

"Romeo and Juliet" movie modern adaptation (1996)

Royal Shakespeare Company website

Romeo and Juliet: Historical background

Romeo and Juliet Allusions

Romeo and Juliet False Statements and Reasoning Errors

From Folger Shakespeare Library:

Reading Shakespeare’s Language: Romeo and Juliet

About Shakespeare’s Romeo and Juliet

Shakespeare's Life: From the Folger Shakespeare Editions

Shakespeare’s Theater: From the Folger Shakespeare Editions

An Introduction to This Text: Romeo and Juliet

Lesson Ideas for Target Standards

Writing:

- Literary Essay - Building a Thesis Statement Graphic Organizer
- Analyzing a Literary Essay
- Exemplars & Non-Exemplars
- Grades 9-12 Narrative Essay Rubric
- How to Write a Perfect 3-Point Thesis Statement

Additional instructional resources:

- Comprehension microskills
- Tier I instructional practices
- Engagement toolkit
- 2026-2027 Writing Rubrics
- Tier 1: Ways to Increase Support for Struggling Readers

Lexia Aspire & PowerUp Resources:

- Word Recognition - phonemic awareness, decoding, fluency
- Language Comprehension - vocabulary, morphology, academic language, syntax
- Writing & reading comprehension - background knowledge, inference, main idea, making predictions, visualization, expository, narrative, argumentative, figurative language, sensory language, transition words, dialogue, counterclaims, editing
- Lexia PowerUp Graphic Organizers

Supplementary Resources

Ways to integrate informational texts into this unit include:

- Provide historical and social context, including gender roles, social structure, the Renaissance, and Shakespeare's Life and Work
- Deepen thematic understanding on Love and Relationships, including love vs. hate and modern love
- Make connections to real-world issues

Informational texts from district-approved resources.

Folger Shakespeare Library

Additional district-approved secondary ELA instructional resource list

Warm-Up Activities to Engage Students Before They Read Nonfiction Texts

Skills, Content, Activity, Assessment

Month	Weeks	Standards	Suggested Learning Targets	Mini-Lessons Skills

April	2	RL.CI.9–10.2 RL.TS.9–10.4 L.VL.9–10.3 SL.PE.9–10.1 W.NW.9–10.3	SWBAT identify the conventions of Elizabethan theater and explain how they shape the experience of reading Shakespeare. SWBAT identify the characteristics of a narrative essay and analyze the narrative essay rubric. SWBAT build foundational vocabulary for reading Shakespeare (verse, prose, soliloquy, aside).	Reading Mini-lessons: • Introduction: Introduce unit theme "Shakespeare and the Equations of Fate." • Possible Do Now: "Do you believe some things in life are 'meant to be,' or do we control our own outcomes?" • Introduce foundational vocabulary: verse, prose, soliloquy, aside, dramatic irony. L.VL.9-10.3 • Read the Prologue and Act 1, Scene 1. RL.TS.9-10.4 Instructional Focus Points: • The Prologue directly tells the audience the play's tragic ending, establishing dramatic irony from the outset. • Shakespeare uses verse (iambic pentameter) for noble characters and prose for comic or lower-status characters. Writing Mini-lessons: • Characteristics of a narrative essay. • Review the narrative essay rubric.

	3-4	RL.CI.9–10.2 RL.IT.9–10.3 L.VI.9–10.4 W.NW.9–10.3	SWBAT analyze how Shakespeare introduces Romeo, Juliet, Tybalt, and Mercutio through dialogue and action. SWBAT identify examples of foreshadowing and dramatic irony in Act 1. SWBAT develop a narrative exposition that establishes character and setting.	Reading Mini-lessons: • Read Act 1, Scenes 2–5 (the Capulet feast, Romeo and Juliet's meeting). • Vocabulary L.VL.9-10.3 o Feud: a prolonged, bitter conflict or quarrel between families or groups. o Banished: forced to leave a place, especially by official decree. o Sonnet: a 14-line poem, often exploring love, with a set rhyme scheme. Instructional Focus: • How does the shared sonnet form of Romeo and Juliet's first meeting (Act 1, Scene 5) signal their connection? RL.IT.9-10.3 Writing Mini-lessons: • Establishing character and setting in a narrative exposition.

		RL.CI.9–10.2 RL.IT.9–10.3 RL.TS.9–10.4 W.NW.9–10.3	SWBAT analyze how the balcony scene builds tension through dramatic irony and impulsive decision-making. SWBAT analyze the risks of the secret marriage and its role in escalating the plot. SWBAT use pacing and rising action to build tension in a narrative.	Reading Mini-lessons: • Read Act 2. Instructional Focus: • How does secrecy function as both a romantic and dangerous force in the play? RL.TS.9-10.4 Writing Mini-lessons: • Building rising action through pacing.

May	1-2	RL.CI.9–10.2
		
		RL.IT.9–10.3
		
		RL.CT.9–10.8
		
		L.VI.9–10.4
		
		W.NW.9–10.3
			SWBAT analyze the turning point of the play as Mercutio's and Tybalt's deaths escalate the tragedy.
			
			SWBAT analyze how Romeo's impulsivity functions as both a character trait and a plot device.
			
			SWBAT develop complex characters whose choices and flaws drive a narrative's events.
				Reading Mini-lessons:
				• Read Act 3.
				• Vocabulary/Figurative Language L.VI.9-10.4
				  ○ Dramatic irony: examine additional examples building through Act 3.
				  ○ Banishment: functions here as both a literal punishment and a symbolic exile from hope.
				
				Instructional Focus:
				• How does Romeo's decision to avenge Mercutio mark a turning point from which the play cannot

				recover? RL.CT.9-10.8 Writing Mini-lessons: • Developing character-driven plot: using a character's flaws and choices to drive events.
		RL.CI.9–10.2 RL.IT.9–10.3 L.VI.9–10.4 W.NW.9–10.3	SWBAT analyze Friar Laurence's plan as a moment where the characters attempt to control fate. SWBAT identify foreshadowing and symbolism building toward the play's climax. SWBAT use foreshadowing and symbolism deliberately in narrative writing.	Reading Mini-lessons: • Read Act 4. Instructional Focus: • Is Friar Laurence's plan a reasonable attempt to defy fate, or does it seal the characters' doom? RL.IT.9-10.3 Writing Mini-lessons: • Using foreshadowing and symbolism deliberately in narrative writing.

	3-4	RL.CI.9–10.2 RL.PP.9–10.5 W.NW.9–10.3	SWBAT analyze how Act 5 brings the play's central tension between fate and choice to its resolution. SWBAT analyze the function of catharsis in tragedy. SWBAT craft a narrative ending that resolves a story's central tension with emotional and thematic impact.	Reading Mini-lessons: • Read Act 5. Instructional Focus: • Does the play ultimately present the ending as fated, or as the result of a series of choices and miscommunications? RL.PP.9-10.5 Writing Mini-lessons: • Crafting a resonant narrative ending.
		W.NW.9–10.3 W.NW.9–10.5 SL.PE.9–10.1	SWBAT draft an original narrative exploring the tension between fate and choice. SWBAT incorporate a clear plot structure, developed characters, and a deliberate use of literary devices.	**AI Lesson: Star-Crossed by Algorithm?** Writing Mini-lessons: • Drafting the full narrative. • Incorporating symbolism, foreshadowing, or dramatic irony deliberately.

June	1-2	L.KL.9–10.1 W.NW.9–10.3 SL.PE.9–10.1	SWBAT develop and strengthen writing by editing with guidance from peers and adults, focusing on grammar. SWBAT develop and strengthen writing by editing with guidance from peers and adults, focusing on punctuation. SWBAT engage in peer review, providing and incorporating constructive feedback.	Writing Mini-lessons: • Editing: Grammar. • Editing: Punctuation. • Peer review protocols and giving constructive feedback.
		RL.CR.9–10.1 RL.CI.9–10.2 RL.IT.9–10.3 RL.TS.9-10.4 RL.PP.9–10.5 RL.CT.9-10.8 L.VL.9–10.3 L.VI.9–10.4 W.NW.9–10.3	SWBAT demonstrate their knowledge of literature by taking a benchmark assessment. SWBAT demonstrate their knowledge of writing a narrative essay. SWBAT reflect on their learning in reading and writing throughout marking period 4 and the school year.	• Reading benchmark MP 4 • Writing benchmark MP 4 • End of Year reflection

Honors Addendum

Rationale for Honors Extension

Honors students are capable of engaging with *Romeo and Juliet* not simply as a story to comprehend, but as a text to interrogate — placing it in conversation with other works, critical theories, and philosophical traditions that complicate any simple reading of "fate." This addendum raises the ceiling of the unit by:

- Introducing supplementary literary and philosophical texts that deepen and complicate the fate-vs-choice theme
- Requiring more sophisticated literary-critical vocabulary and theoretical framing
- Increasing the complexity, originality, and craft expectations of the narrative writing product
- Building in independent research, extended discourse, and self-directed analytical work
- Raising expectations for precision, nuance, and original insight across all student output

Supplementary Texts

Companion Literary Texts (fate and tragic structure)

- **Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*** (excerpts or full text) — the foundational classical text on fate and free will; allows direct comparison between Greek and Elizabethan conceptions of fate, prophecy, and tragic flaw (*hamartia*)
- **Thomas Hardy, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*** or selected short stories — a modern literary tradition (Hardy's fiction is frequently read as "fatalistic") for comparing how a later author handles similar questions of consequence and inevitability
- **Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*** (excerpts) — a modern tragedy that raises the question of whether tragic consequence can exist without gods or fate at all, useful for challenging students to define tragedy independent of supernatural forces
- **Toni Morrison, *Sula*** or selected excerpts — for examining how community, history, and social structure function as a modern analogue to "fate" in shaping character outcomes

Poetry for Thematic Comparison

- **"The Convergence of the Twain"** – Thomas Hardy (fate and inevitability, using the Titanic as a structural metaphor)
- **"Fate"** or **"Design"** – Robert Frost (Frost's "Design" directly interrogates whether a governing design/fate exists in the universe)
- **"Invictus"** – William Ernest Henley (a direct counterpoint: a poem asserting the primacy of individual will against circumstance)

Critical and Philosophical Texts

- Excerpts from **Aristotle's *Poetics*** — the original theoretical framework for tragedy, hamartia, and catharsis; gives students the vocabulary to engage in genuine literary-critical (not just thematic) analysis
- Excerpts on **determinism vs. free will** from accessible philosophy sources (e.g., a well-scaffolded excerpt addressing hard determinism, compatibilism, and libertarian free will) to give students a philosophical framework for the unit's central question
- A brief secondary source on **Elizabethan beliefs about astrology and fate** (to historically contextualize why Shakespeare's original audience would have found "star-crossed" language meaningful, not merely poetic)

Optional Extension: Adaptation Study

- A scene-level comparison across **two or more film adaptations** of *Romeo and Juliet* (e.g., Zeffirelli 1968, Luhrmann 1996) to examine how directorial choices interpret or challenge the play's treatment of fate

Increased Rigor in Instruction

- **Socratic seminars** replacing standard class discussion for key thematic checkpoints, requiring students to come prepared with textual evidence and prepared discussion questions
- **Independent research component**: students select one critical lens (feminist, psychoanalytic, historicist, existentialist) and locate a scholarly or reputable critical source to bring into their analysis, practicing source evaluation and integration of outside scholarship
- **Comparative analysis requirement**: students must draw connections between *Romeo and Juliet* and at least one supplementary text in their culminating discussion or written reflection, rather than treating the play in isolation
- **Philosophical framing discussions**: structured debate or discussion activities in which students argue for determinist, compatibilist, or free-will positions using textual evidence from the play

More Rigorous Culminating Product

Honors students complete an elevated version of the narrative essay with the following additional expectations:

- **Thematic sophistication**: the narrative must engage explicitly with a specific philosophical stance on fate and free will (e.g., compatibilism), rather than treating the theme in general terms
- **Structural ambition**: students are expected to employ a non-linear or otherwise sophisticated narrative structure (e.g., frame narrative, dramatic irony sustained across the piece, foreshadowing techniques modeled directly on specific moments in the play) rather than a straightforward chronological plot
- **Intertextual grounding**: students must incorporate a clear, deliberate allusion to *Romeo and Juliet* or one of the supplementary texts within their narrative (a symbol, structural echo, or direct reference), and be prepared to explain that choice in an accompanying reflective commentary
- **Reflective commentary requirement**: students submit a short analytical commentary (500–750 words) alongside their narrative, explaining and justifying their structural and craft choices with reference to specific techniques studied in the unit — a component not required in the standard unit, which pushes students to articulate their craft decisions with the same precision expected of literary analysis
- **Elevated craft expectations**: grading criteria for honors submissions should expect greater control of voice, more precise and varied sentence structure, more deliberate use of literary devices (symbolism, motif, foreshadowing), and a more fully realized thematic argument than the standard-level rubric requires

Additional Enduring Understanding (Honors)

Fate, Philosophy, and Literary Tradition: Students will understand that the question of fate versus free will is not unique to *Romeo and Juliet*, but represents a recurring philosophical and literary problem addressed across cultures and eras — from Greek tragedy through modern literature — and that authors use distinct literary techniques (prophecy, dramatic irony, social/historical circumstance) depending on their cultural and

philosophical context to dramatize this same enduring tension.

Additional Essential Questions (Honors)

1. How does Shakespeare's treatment of fate in *Romeo and Juliet* compare to the treatment of fate in classical Greek tragedy, and what does this comparison reveal about how conceptions of fate change across cultures and eras?
2. Can a story be considered "tragic" without an external force like fate or the gods — and if so, what takes fate's place in driving a modern tragic narrative?
3. To what extent is compatibilism (the idea that fate and free will can coexist) a useful lens for understanding Romeo and Juliet's choices within their circumstances?
4. How does incorporating deliberate literary allusion or structural homage to an existing text change the way a writer builds meaning into an original narrative?

Suggested Assessment Adjustments

- Rubrics should weight **thematic sophistication and originality** more heavily than in the standard unit, with explicit criteria for philosophical grounding and intertextual engagement
- Socratic seminar participation and independent research quality should be assessed as a formal component of the unit grade
- Consider a **higher word-count expectation** and a mandatory **revision conference** (peer or teacher) prior to final submission, given the added structural complexity of the honors narrative task

Spiraling for Mastery

Content or Skill for this Unit	Spiral Focus from Previous Unit
• **Content Areas** 1. Iambic Pentameter: ▪ Understand what iambic pentameter is: a line of verse with five metrical feet, each consisting of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable (da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM, da-DUM). ▪ Explore how iambic pentameter mirrors natural speech while adding a rhythmic, almost musical quality to the dialogue. ▪ Analyze examples of iambic pentameter in the play, such as the prologue and key speeches	▪ **Identifying and Defining a Focused Argument/Thesis:** Students learned to identify a significant issue, define a specific research question, and develop a focused thesis statement. This thesis guides the rest of their essay, making it clear and structured. Students will build on this ability to develop a clear, debatable thesis that answers a specific question related to *Romeo and Juliet*. ▪ **Conducting Research and Gathering Evidence:** Students became proficient in gathering reliable, credible sources, often from academic journals, books, or reputable websites, to support their argument. They also develop skills in synthesizing information from multiple sources. Students will apply the same research skills to gather evidence, but this time, the evidence will be pulled from the text itself (*Romeo and Juliet*).

by Romeo and Juliet.

2. Variations in Rhythm:
    - Identify where Shakespeare deviates from strict iambic pentameter, such as with spondees (two stressed syllables), trochees (stressed followed by unstressed), or the occasional use of a sixth foot (a feminine ending).
    - Discuss how these variations create emphasis, reflect a character's emotional state, or convey a shift in tone.
3. Blank Verse vs. Prose:
    - Compare the use of blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter) with prose. Investigate why certain characters speak in prose while others use verse, and what this distinction reveals about class, mood, or psychological state.
    - Analyze scenes where characters switch between prose and verse, such as in the exchanges between the Nurse and Juliet.
4. Rhyming Couplets:
    - Examine the use of rhyming couplets at the end of scenes or speeches and discuss their purpose (e.g., to signal the end of a scene, to summarize a key point, or to add emphasis).
    - Consider how the rhythm of the couplets contributes to the play's overall tone.
5. Word Play and Puns:
    - Analyze how Shakespeare's wordplay, puns, and use of alliteration contribute to the rhythm and musicality of the language.

They will analyze how specific language choices, dramatic techniques, and character developments support their thesis.

- **Structuring the Argument and Essay:** Students learned to organize their research essay into a clear and logical structure: an introduction with a thesis, body paragraphs with topic sentences and supporting evidence, and a conclusion that ties everything together. Students apply the same organizational structure to their argumentative essays on *Romeo and Juliet*, ensuring that each body paragraph presents a clear argument or analysis, supported by textual evidence, and flows logically from one to the next.
- **Evaluating and Synthesizing Evidence:** Students learned to critically evaluate and synthesize evidence from a range of sources, ensuring that each piece of evidence directly supports their argument. In their analysis of *Romeo and Juliet*, students will evaluate and synthesize various textual elements, such as character speeches, plot developments, and thematic motifs (e.g., the tension between love and violence). They will synthesize evidence from different parts of the play to argue how Shakespeare's use of language shapes the themes and characters.
- **Proper Citation and Ethical Use of Sources:** Students learned how to cite sources correctly, whether they are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing, and understand the importance of academic integrity. Students will apply the same citation skills to their argumentative essays on *Romeo and Juliet*. They will use textual evidence, correctly citing quotes from the play.

- Discuss how these elements enhance the meaning of the text and engage the audience.

6. Sonnet Form:
    - Study the use of the sonnet form, particularly in the first meeting of Romeo and Juliet (Act 1, Scene 5).
    - Discuss how the sonnet's structured rhythm reflects the themes of love and fate in the play.

Skills Development

1. Scansion:
    - Practice scansion, the act of analyzing verse to determine its rhythm. Mark stressed and unstressed syllables in lines from the play.
    - Develop the ability to recognize and articulate the effects of different metrical patterns.
2. Close Reading:
    - Engage in close reading of passages, focusing on how Shakespeare's rhythmical choices enhance the emotional and thematic impact of the scene.
    - Identify specific examples where the rhythm underscores key themes like love, conflict, and fate.
3. Textual Analysis:
    - Analyze the text for how the rhythm of language interacts with other literary devices, such as imagery, metaphor, and symbolism.
    - Explore how Shakespeare's use of rhythm supports character development and

dramatic tension. 4. Performance and Recitation: ▪ Practice reciting lines with attention to rhythm and meter, considering how the delivery of the text can influence its meaning. ▪ Experiment with performing scenes, exploring how changes in rhythm can affect tone and interpretation. 5. Comparative Analysis: ▪ Compare the rhythm in Romeo and Juliet with other Shakespearean plays or with contemporary works. Discuss how rhythm contributes to different styles and effects.	

Career Readiness, Life Literacies, and Key 21st Century Skills

9.4.12.CI.1	Demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, and use creative skills and ideas (e.g., 1.1.12prof.CR3a).
9.2.12.CAP.1	Analyze unemployment rates for workers with different levels of education and how the economic, social, and political conditions of a time period are affected by a recession.
9.4.12.CI.3	Investigate new challenges and opportunities for personal growth, advancement, and transition (e.g., 2.1.12.PGD.1).
9.4.12.CT.1	Identify problem-solving strategies used in the development of an innovative product or practice (e.g., 1.1.12acc.C1b, 2.2.12.PF.3).
9.4.12.CT.2	Explain the potential benefits of collaborating to enhance critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., 1.3E.12profCR3.a).
9.4.12.CT.4	Participate in online strategy and planning sessions for course-based, school-based, or other project and determine the strategies that contribute to effective outcomes.
9.2.12.CAP.13	Analyze how the economic, social, and political conditions of a time period can affect the labor market.

Interdisciplinary Connections

4	Model with mathematics
1.4.12adv.Cr2	Organizing and developing ideas.

7	Look for and make use of structure
1.4.12adv.Cr2a	Collaborate as a creative team to make informative and analytical choices for devised or scripted theatre work.
1.4.12adv.Cr2b	Collaborate as a creative team to make original artistic choices in devised or scripted theatre work.
8	Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning
1.4.12adv.Pr	Performing
1.4.12adv.Pr6	Conveying meaning through art.
1.4.12adv.Pr6a	Produce a devised or scripted theatre production for a specific audience that employs research and analysis grounded in the creative perspectives of the playwright, director, designer, and dramaturg.
1.4.12adv.Re	Responding
1.4.12adv.Re7a	Demonstrate an understanding of multiple interpretations of artistic criteria and how each might be used to influence future artistic choices of devised or scripted theatre work.
A.SSE.A.1.a	Interpret parts of an expression, such as terms, factors, and coefficients.
1.4.12adv.Re7b	Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to devised or scripted theatre work.
1.4.12adv.Re8a	Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a devised or scripted theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.
1.4.12adv.Re8b	Analyze and evaluate varied aesthetic interpretations of production elements for the same devised or scripted theatre work.
A.SSE.B.3	Choose and produce an equivalent form of an expression to reveal and explain properties of the quantity represented by the expression.
1.4.12adv.Re8c	Compare and debate the connection between devised or scripted theatre work and contemporary issues that may impact audiences.
A.SSE.B.4	Derive and/or explain the formula for the sum of a finite geometric series (when the common ratio is not 1), and use the formula to solve problems.
1.4.12adv.Re9a	Use detailed supporting evidence and appropriate criteria to revise personal work and interpret the work of others when participating in or observing devised or scripted theatre work.
1.4.12adv.Re9b	Use understandings of cultures and contexts to shape personal responses to devised or scripted theatre work.
1.4.12adv.Re9c	Support and explain aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs to create a context for critical research that informs artistic decisions in devised or scripted theatre work.
1.4.12adv.Cn	Connecting
1.4.12adv.Cn10a	Collaborate on devised or scripted theatre work that examines a critical global issue using multiple personal, community and cultural perspectives.
1.4.12adv.Cn11c	Justify the creative choices made in a devised or scripted theatre work based on a critical interpretation of specific data from theatre research.
HS-PS2	Motion and Stability: Forces and Interactions
PS2.A	Forces and Motion
6.2.2	Renaissance, Reformation, Scientific Revolution, and Enlightenment (1350–1700)
6.2.12.HistoryCC.2.b	Explore the factors that laid the foundation for the Renaissance (i.e., Asian and Islamic, Ancient Greek and Roman innovations).
6.2.12.HistoryUP.2.a	Analyze the impact of new intellectual, philosophical, and scientific ideas on how humans viewed themselves and how they viewed their physical and spiritual worlds.

HS-LS3	Heredity: Inheritance and Variation of Traits
HS-LS3-3	Apply concepts of statistics and probability to explain the variation and distribution of expressed traits in a population.
HS-LS4	Biological Evolution: Unity and Diversity
HS-LS4-1	Communicate scientific information that common ancestry and biological evolution are supported by multiple lines of empirical evidence.
HS-LS4-4	Construct an explanation based on evidence for how natural selection leads to adaptation of populations.
HS-LS4-6	Create or revise a simulation to test a solution to mitigate adverse impacts of human activity on biodiversity.