Romeo and Juliet Historical Research Project

Learning Expectations:
• You will become an expert on your assigned topic in order to teach your classmates about it.
• You will gain knowledge for Romeo and Juliet and Shakespeare by researching and writing about a topic related to the time period and playwright.
• You will practice skills needed to research, cite, and present information on a given topic.
• You will learn about a variety of related issues while only researching one.

Topics:
Below you will find a list of topics, some guidelines for research, and a few suggested web sites.

1. Shakespeare’s Life and Career in the Theater: When, where and to whom was Shakespeare born? What kind of education did he receive? Describe his marriage/children. When did he start writing plays? When did he stop? Were there any interruptions in his playwriting career? Why? What other types of writing did he do besides plays? Highlight a few of his most famous plays and sonnets.

2. Nuts and Bolts: The Globe Theater: When and where was it built? Describe the structure. What was it made of? Shape? Size? Roof? Describe the stage, actors, and spaces available for the audience. What were groundlings? What was the purpose of the flags? How much did it cost to see a show in the Globe? Describe the audience. What would the audience do if they did not like a performance? How/when did the theater burn down? When/where was it rebuilt? Does the theater exist today? If so, where?

3. Long Live the Queen: While the play was set in Italy, Shakespeare lived and worked in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Research the life of Queen Elizabeth I. What was life like during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I? What was Shakespeare’s relationship to Queen Elizabeth? How did she influence Shakespeare’s work? Give interesting facts and details beyond dates.

4. Courtship/Marriage/Wedding Customs of Elizabethan times: What did betrothal mean? Research marriage and betrothal customs. What color should the bride’s dress be? How is the intention to marry announced? What happens if it is not announced previous to the event? Describe the wedding procession. What is a dowry? Explain how important is a wedding ring to the Elizabethans?

5. The Role of the Female: What role did the Elizabethan woman play in society? What rights and privileges did she have and which were denied women? Why were females not tolerated as actors during Shakespeare’s lifetime? What was the thinking that had young boys playing female roles?

6. The Class Structure of Elizabethan England: Discuss how power, authority, wealth, work, living conditions, lifestyles, religion, and culture differed among the gentry, middle class, and working class.
7. **Religion in Europe in the 1500’s:** What were the predominant religions in England? Italy? Describe the structure of the church hierarchy. Discuss the power yielded by the church.

8. **Unsolved Mysteries:** Some people believe that Shakespeare did not really write his plays. There are some theories that someone wrote the plays under the pen name of Shakespeare. Was Shakespeare an imposter? Some say the portraits you see of Shakespeare are not really him. Explore these theories. What was the authorship controversy all about? Why are there doubts about Shakespeare’s authenticity? Look into the following: Sir Francis Bacon, Edward DeVere, Christopher Marlowe, and Queen Elizabeth.

9. **Say Yes to the Dress: Fashions of the Elizabethan Times:** What styles were fashionable for men and women during this time and why? Who were the most famous designers of this time? How did fashion impact society during this time? What materials and colors were used for clothing for the various classes?

10. **Origins of the Story of Romeo and Juliet, Italian Blood Feuds/Vendettas, and Historical and Cultural Background on Verona:** The story of Romeo and Juliet has roots in Italy’s past history. What was 14th century Verona, Italy like? Describe its attributes: housing, climate, clothes, location, etc. Blood feuds were also an integral part of Italian history, especially in certain areas. Explore this topic and the roots of the Romeo and Juliet story.

11. **Holidays, Entertainment, Foods of the Elizabethan Era:** What were popular forms of entertainment? Sports? Describe some of the more popular customs and holidays of the times. What were some of the typical foods and drink of the times – for lower and upper classes?

12. **Creepy Elizabethan Stuff: Medicine, Magic, Superstitions, The Plague, and Punishment:** Explore the common superstitions that were held to be true during this time period. How was medicine practiced, and how were common ailments treated? What was the Black Plague and what was its impact? What were some of the more popular forms of punishment and torture used during this period?

**Research: (Individual Daily Grade)**

**Minimum Required Sources:**
- 2 database articles from the AHS Library Page
- 1 additional website

**Suggested Websites:**
http://www.folger.edu/shakespeare
http://www.shakespeareinamericancommunities.org/ (Click on “Educational Resources”)  
http://www.bardweb.net/index.html

You will be responsible for documenting your research on the provided research page. EACH PARTNER MUST DOCUMENT THE RESEARCH. You will not be allowed to turn in only one research notes page per partnership.

Remember: it is never acceptable to present someone else’s work, words, or ideas as your own! Remember to cite, cite, and cite all the information that is not your own – that means directly quoted AND paraphrased information AND pictures! Plagiarism is illegal and punishable according to the Atascocita High School Student Handbook.
Project Presentation: (Partner Test Grade)

Google Slides, Prezi, or PowerPoint
Partners should split the research equally so that each can contribute to the final product. Your project presentation should include a minimum of 8 slides:

- **Title slide**- names your topic
- **Topic Overview**- gives the audience a general summary of what you were supposed to research about
- **Facts Slide #1**- answers the questions provided for you in your topic summary
- **Facts Slide #2**- answers the questions provided for you in your topic summary
- **Facts Slide #3**- answers the questions provided for you in your topic summary
- **Pictures/Fun facts**- you can provide labeled pictures that relate to your topic or give the most interesting/surprising fact that you learned while researching
- **Connection to the play**- What influence do you think your topic has on the play, *Romeo and Juliet*? Why do you think it is important for us to have this background knowledge going in to the play? (This will more than likely be a reasonable guess. You will see why it is important as we read.)
- **Works Cited**- This slide needs to be a properly formatted Works Cited page that should include AT LEAST 3 sources- two database articles and one web site article.

You will present the information on your assigned topic designed to teach your classmates what you have researched (while entertaining as well.) You will be evaluated on your preparation, creativity, and presentation. **The presentation will be a formative grade.**

**Project Rubric**

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<td>Topic Overview:</td>
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Total Project Grade (test): _______ / 100