



KEY WORDS

Obedience– Following orders or expectations.

Dowry– Money, land or property given by a bride's family when she married.

Historical Context



What are we learning?

We are learning about the historical context of *Romeo and Juliet*, especially how women were expected to behave in Shakespeare's time.

Why are we learning it?

Understanding context helps us understand why characters like Juliet, Capulet, Lady Capulet and the Nurse behave the way they do.

Starter – Agree or disagree?

1. Young people should always obey their parents.
2. Parents should have some say in who their children marry.
3. Family reputation is more important than individual happiness.
4. Men and women had equal power in Shakespeare's time.
5. Juliet would have had complete freedom to choose her own future.

- **Sentence starter:**
I agree/disagree with statement ____ because...

Context – Make Notes

Society was **patriarchal**

In Shakespeare's time, England was a **patriarchal society**. This meant that men were usually seen as the heads of families. Fathers had control over important decisions, including marriage, money and reputation.

Women were often expected to be:

- obedient
- modest
- quiet
- respectful
- loyal to their fathers and husbands

This context helps us understand why **Juliet** is expected to obey **Lord Capulet**.

Marriage was often about family, not love

In Elizabethan England, marriage was often connected to wealth, status and family honour.

Wealthy families sometimes arranged marriages to improve their social position.

A daughter's marriage could affect the whole family's reputation.

This meant Juliet's marriage would not just be a personal decision; it would be a family decision.



Women had limited choices

Women had fewer rights and opportunities than men. Many women were expected to marry and become mothers. Their future was often controlled by their father first, and then by their husband.

This makes **Juliet's** behaviour more shocking to a **Shakespearean audience** because she challenges the expectations placed on her.

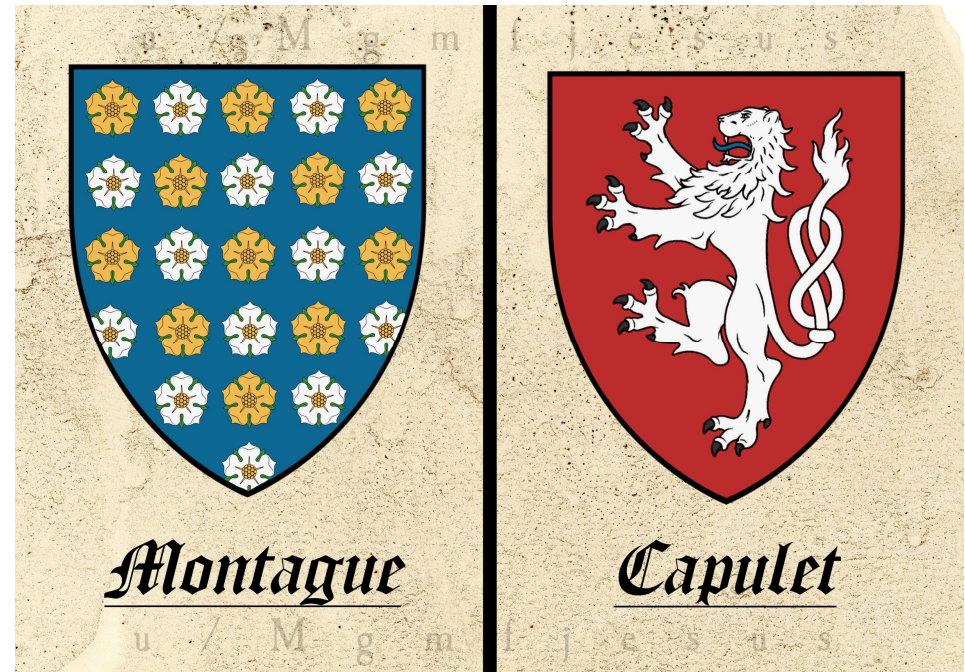


Honour and reputation mattered

Family honour was extremely important. If someone disobeyed their family, married

without permission, or behaved in a way seen as shameful, it could damage the family's reputation.

This helps explain why the feud between the **Montagues** and **Capulets** is so serious. The families **care deeply about pride, status and honour.**



Match the **context idea** to the **meaning**

Context Idea	Meaning
Patriarchy	A. Marriage organised by families
Arranged marriage	B. A society controlled mostly by men
Honour	C. The idea that children should follow their parents' wishes
Obedience	D. Family reputation and respect

Context Point	What did this mean in Shakespeare's time?	How might this affect Juliet?
Patriarchy		
Arranged marriage		Marriage was often decided by...
Honour		
Obedience		Daughters were expected to...

Checking understanding

Complete the paragraph below

In Shakespeare's time, women were expected to be _____ and _____. Society was _____, which meant that men had most of the _____. This affects our understanding of Juliet because she is expected to obey her _____. Her marriage would not simply be about _____, but also about family _____ and status. Therefore, when Juliet makes her own choices, a Shakespearean audience may have seen her as _____, whereas a modern audience may see her as _____.

Word bank:

rebellious, father, honour, quiet, brave, patriarchal, love, power, obedient

True or False?

Be prepared to share!

1. Elizabethan society gave men more authority than women.
2. Juliet would have had complete freedom to choose her husband.
3. Marriage could improve a family's wealth and status.
4. Family honour was important in Shakespeare's time.
5. Women were usually expected to disobey their fathers.
6. Understanding context helps us understand Juliet's situation.

Plenary

Answer the following in FULL sentences

1. What does **patriarchy** mean?
2. Why was marriage important to families in Shakespeare's time?
3. How does this context help us understand Juliet?