



William Shakespeare's
Romeo and Juliet



James Russell Lowell

Assignment 19

Compare, Persuade, Debate

- *literature*. Read Act 5 of *Romeo and Juliet*. Be sure to use the copy found online, as it contains useful footnotes, etc. As always, be ready for a quiz.
- *in-class essay*. We will be writing an in-class musings essay in the next couple of weeks (a surprise) on a quotation by the poet James Russel Lowell (1819-1891): *Books are the bees which carry the quickening pollen from one to another mind*. The following is the context in which the quotation was taken: “Let us be thankful that there is no court by which we can be excluded from our share in the inheritance of the great poets of all ages and countries, to which our simple humanity entitles us. No great poet has ever sung but the whole human race has been, sooner or later, the wiser and better for it. . . . The intellect is a dioecious plant, and books are the bees which carry the quickening pollen from one to another mind. It detracts nothing from Chaucer that we can trace in him the influences of Dante and Boccaccio; nothing from Spenser that he calls Chaucer master . . . There is no degradation in such indebtedness.” In this essay, you want to have a conversation with your reader—about books and how they enlighten, inspire, cultivate, etc. You may choose, however, to talk generally about ideas communicated through inventions, etc. that inspire other inventors, entrepreneurs, etc. Remember that the musings essay incorporates elements of other formats, such as narrative, comparison, classification and division, etc. One of the most important elements of writing a musings essay, though, is *to sustain a casual tone to your writing*. You may eventually use this essay for Speech Night.
- *assigned essay*. We will be working on the persuasive essays right after we finish *Romeo and Juliet*. We will also learn how to argue, using examples, facts and statistics, etc. and discuss fallacies that may take away from your argument. The essay will be due the third week of February. I will be giving you ideas for the persuasive essay in class.
- *speech night*. You will begin your speech night project, which will be to write a speech in one of the following formats: expository, narrative, persuasive, musings, or comparison. I will be suggesting some topics and posting example essays online, but I will be assigning each format so every format is represented by at least one student in the class.

Long-Term Assignment

- *assigned essay*. Write a persuasive essay on one of the assigned topics or a topic of your choice, due the third week in February.
- *speech night essay*. Your Speech Night essay will be due the first week in March.