

English 9
Romeo and Juliet

Name _____

Essay on Fate

This year, we have discussed the idea of fate in relation to both the ODYSSEY and ROMEO AND JULIET. In ancient Greek society, people believed that fate could not be avoided because it was impossible for mortals to foil the will of the gods. Humans had little control over what happened to them. For example, Odysseus was unable to prevent his men eating Helios' cattle, which the prophet Teiresias had warned him about. Similarly, Romeo and Juliet fall prey to fate. Many events occur beyond their control which prevent them from enjoying a happy courtship and marriage. At the end of the play, the reader is left wondering what would have happened had fate not intervened to prevent these lovers from being together. Clearly, fate is something about which Shakespeare wants the reader to think. In the prologue, he calls them, "A pair of star-crossed lovers..." Before Romeo attends the Capulet ball, he fears "Some consequence yet hanging in the stars." In Shakespeare's time, people were wary of what the stars said, and they believed in the consequences of fate.

Think about the role of fate in modern society. Do people believe in fate today or do things happen because they cause them to? Some people believe that it is a combination of the two. In an essay, choose and discuss in depth 3-4 examples of how fate affects the outcome of the tragedy of ROMEO AND JULIET. Also, explain what you believe to be the role of fate in society today and how that view differs from Shakespeare's time. Make sure to include the Act, scene, and lines which you use as evidence of your examples. (I, ii, 34 - 38).