

Debate Script Sample Response

Prompt: Your team must argue that couples should know one another for at least one year before they marry.

Opening Statement

Books, movies, plays, and songs are filled with romantic love stories that highlight for us whirlwind romances that end with beautiful weddings. From Cinderella to the majority of books in the romance genre, the couple shows to us a happily ever after story. Yet, we less often see in stories the reality of life as a married couple who do not take the time to get to know one another well, such as in the case of *Romeo and Juliet*. They meet at a party and instantly discuss their mutual attraction. A few hours later, Romeo and Juliet discuss plans for marriage, and the next day, they marry after knowing one another for less than twenty-four hours. Two days later, they are dead. Therefore, today, we are here to argue in favor of the unequivocally true statement that the play *Romeo and Juliet* highlights that a couple should know one another for at least one year before getting married because we firmly believe that an extended courtship for Romeo and Juliet could have prevented anxiety, shallowness, and secrets in their lives. By the end of this debate, we are confident that you, too, will believe that the play *Romeo and Juliet* highlights that a couple should know one another for at least one year before they marry.

Argument #1

The play *Romeo and Juliet* highlights that a couple should know one another for at least one year before they marry to reduce anxiety in the relationship. In Act 2, Scene 2, lines 125–127, Juliet is anxious about the swiftness of her courtship with Romeo, worrying that their love "is too

rash, too unadvised, too sudden, / Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be / Ere one can say 'It lightens . . . ' " They begin discussing love and marriage so quickly that Juliet is frightened that the love may last only as long as lightning in the sky, which flashes and then quickly disappears. Juliet's anxiety only increases throughout Act 2. In Act 2, Scene 5, lines 49–50, she wonders if Romeo truly wants to marry her. She anxiously waits for her Nurse to return from seeking out Romeo and then begs her Nurse to reveal if Romeo truly wants to marry her (2.5.49–70). If Romeo and Juliet had spent more time together before trying to arrange a wedding, Juliet would likely be more secure in her feelings for Romeo. She would not have to wonder if his love for her would disappear or if he truly wanted to marry her. Getting to know someone over the course of at least a year gives feelings a chance to fully develop.

Argument #2

In our second argument, we will explain that the play *Romeo and Juliet* highlights that a couple should know one another for at least one year before they marry one another to allow the couple to form a deep connection. When Romeo leaps the Capulet orchard walls in Act 2, Scene 2, to find Juliet, he describes her eyes in lines 16–18 by dreamily proclaiming that if the most beautiful stars in the sky were busy, they would ask Juliet's eyes to twinkle in their place until they returned. The metaphor paints her as a shining star in his eyes, which is a romantic image. However, the depth of Romeo's love never deepens in the scene. In line 66, he describes her as a "fair maid," and in line 177, he describes her voice as the "softest music." These descriptions highlight that his attraction focuses on her physical attributes, like a beautiful face and soft voice, rather than revealing an understanding of her as a person. Likewise, in Act 4, Scene 2, Juliet dreamily says in lines 24–26, "Give me my Romeo, and when I shall die, / Take him and cut him out in little stars, / And he will make the face of heaven so fine / That all the world will be in love

with night." The image of Romeo forever in the stars is poetically romantic but lacks depth.

Throughout her thirty-three-line soliloquy, Juliet never mentions the personality characteristics she loves about Romeo. While Romeo and Juliet's language to describe one another is romantic, it does not convey that they know one another on a deep, respectful level that couples who are marrying should have.

Argument #3

Thirdly, we will argue that the play *Romeo and Juliet* highlights that a couple should know one another for at least one year before they marry in order to avoid secrets that lead to deadly consequences. Romeo and Juliet are so eager to progress their relationship to marriage that they leave no time to figure out how to navigate the reactions from their families. They can only marry in secret, which leads to deadly consequences. In Act 3, Scene 1, Tybalt, Juliet's cousin, calls Romeo a "villain" and challenges him to a duel for going to the Capulet party because he is completely unaware that Romeo is now his cousin. This leads to Mercutio's death, causing Romeo to be so enraged that he forgets Tybalt is Juliet's cousin, declaring in lines 132–134 that Mercutio's soul has just left and is waiting for Tybalt's soul to keep him company. If Romeo and Juliet had married without secrecy, both Mercutio's death and Tybalt's death, as well as Romeo's banishment, could have likely been avoided. In Act 3, Scene 5, the secrets and lies continue to cause consequences as Juliet is faced with marrying Paris when she is already married to Romeo. She feels that she can not be honest with her father, Lord Capulet, who has no idea about her wedding to Romeo. He threatens to disown her if she does not marry Paris on Thursday. In response, she takes a sleeping potion that leads to Romeo believing she is dead, which prompts him to take his own life. Love and marriage should not be a secret, and the play highlights what can happen when they are.

Rebuttal #1

Our opponents believe that the love Romeo and Juliet felt for one another was so strong that there was no need to wait a year for marriage. While we do not deny that Romeo and Juliet feel that they are in love and use strong romantic language, we hold firm in the belief that a longer courtship and betrothal would have given Romeo and Juliet, as well as Friar Laurence and the Nurse more time to figure out a way for Romeo and Juliet to marry without lying to their families. We agree that Romeo and Juliet have instant, romantic feelings for one another, as shown in Act 1, Scene 5, at their first meeting, and Act 2, Scene 2, when they declare their love and intention to marry. However, that does not mean they should hastily marry. The haste requires Juliet to lie to her parents repeatedly. For example, in Act 4, Scene 2, she cannot tell her parents why she cannot marry Paris. She has to lie and agree to marry Paris, and then pretend to go to confession to get help from Friar Laurence, who is also deceitful. Juliet lies again when she takes the sleeping potion the night before her wedding in Act 4, Scene 4. In fact, Romeo and Juliet's rushed, rather than planned, marriage furthers our third argument. It directly causes Tybalt to be unaware of the relationship between Romeo and Juliet in Act 3, Scene 1, causing him to challenge Romeo to a duel. The fight results in the slaying of Mercutio, which sets in motion Tybalt's death, Romeo's exile, Juliet's betrothal to Paris, and other events that lead directly to the tomb scene. Therefore, despite Romeo and Juliet's love for one another, the play clearly highlights that a couple should know one another for more than a year before marrying in order to avoid lying to one's family.

Rebuttal #2

The opponents of the statement "the play *Romeo and Juliet* highlights that a couple should know one another for at least one year before they marry" argue that the feud leads to the deaths of loved ones in the play, not the rushed marriage. However, this is false because the feud would not have led to Romeo and Juliet in the Capulet tomb. The feud causes fighting between the Capulets and Montagues in Act 1, Scene 1, causing the prince to angrily declare in lines 91-97 that three fights have broken out amongst his citizens because of words exchanged between the Capulets and Montagues. Three times they have disturbed the quiet streets of Verona and caused the elderly of Verona to get their old weapons to break up your fights. However, notably, Romeo and Juliet are absent from this scene. They do not take part in the feud, nor do they seem to care about it. While there is fighting in Act 1, Scene 1, it is not until the marriage of Romeo and Juliet that we see people begin to die in the play. Mercutio and Tybalt die in Act 3, Scene 1, and then Juliet fakes her own death, not because of the feud but because she is married to Romeo and wants to be with him. This ultimately leads to her own actual death, as well as the deaths of Romeo and Paris. Therefore, the feud may have caused more disturbances in the street, but it is the marriage that leads to deaths.

Rebuttal #3

In the previous argument, the other team stated that the play *Romeo and Juliet* does not highlight that a couple should know one another for at least a year before marrying because Romeo and Juliet's marriage is supported by fate. However, this argument ignores that Romeo and Juliet married of their own free will. In Act 2, Scene 2, Juliet tells Romeo in lines 150–151, "If that thy bent of love be honorable, / Thy purpose marriage, send me word tomorrow." Fate is not

pushing Romeo and Juliet together. Juliet is freely asking Romeo to send her word tomorrow if he intends to marry her. Likewise, in Act 2, Scene 6, Friar Laurence marries Romeo and Juliet, intending to end the feud, not because fate is pushing him towards the decision. Therefore, it is free will, not fate, that results in Romeo and Juliet's marriage.

Closing Statement

In today's debate, we agreed with the statement that the play *Romeo and Juliet* highlights that a couple should know one another for at least one year before they marry. We stand firm in our belief because the swift marriage leads to anxiety, shallowness, and dangerous secrets in the lives of Romeo and Juliet. Our first piece of evidence outlined how Romeo and Juliet began planning their marriage so swiftly that we think their interactions were laced with anxiety. Secondly, we provided evidence that Romeo and Juliet may not have gotten the opportunity to develop deep, complex feelings for each other due to the expediency of their marriage. Lastly, we explained that the swift marriage required secrets that might have led to deadly consequences. Our opponents argued that the play did not highlight the dangers of marrying too quickly due to Romeo and Juliet's romantic, fated love and the intensity of the feud; however, none of these reasons supersede the fact that Romeo and Juliet's swift marriage leads to tragedy. Therefore, we hope you might join us in advocating for people to wait at least one year before getting married to create more stable, deep relationships in our society.