

**The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, Act I, by William Shakespeare**  
**Literary Analysis: Dialogue and Stage Directions**

**Dialogue** is conversation between or among characters. In prose, dialogue is usually set off with quotation marks. In drama, the dialogue generally follows the name of the speaker, as in this example:

BENVOLIO. I aimed so near when I suppose you loved.

ROMEO. A right good markman. And she's fair I love.

Dialogue reveals the personalities and relationships of the characters and advances the action of a play.

**Stage directions** are notes in the text of a play that describe how the work should be performed, or staged. These instructions are usually printed in italics and sometimes set in brackets or parentheses. They describe scenes, lighting, sound effects, and the appearance and physical actions of the characters, as in this example:

*Scene iii.* FRIAR LAWRENCE's cell.

*[Enter. FRIAR LAWRENCE alone, with a basket.]*

As you read, notice how the dialogue and stage directions work together to help you "see" and "hear" the play in your mind.

**DIRECTIONS:** *Read the following passages from Act I and then use the lines provided to answer the questions.*

TYBALT. Patience perforce with willful choler meeting  
Makes my flesh tremble in their different greeting.  
I will withdraw; but this intrusion shall,  
Now seeming sweet, convert to bitt'rest gall. (Act I, Scene v, ll. 88–91)

1. In the context of the scene, what does Tybalt mean by "this intrusion"?

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2. What do the lines reveal about Tybalt's personality?

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3. What do the lines foreshadow for the plot of the play?

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