

Film Worksheet 1.3

Composition in a Frame

Knowledge base

1. If you have completed the work on drama in your book (pages 55-61), recall the story of the play *Romeo and Juliet*.
2. The play is a tragedy.
 - a. Define a tragedy. Then check your ideas with the *Glossary* on page 430 of your book.
 - b. What is the typical structure of a tragic play?

First impressions



Romeo and Juliet

directed by Franco Zeffirelli
(see film clip
on the Class Video DVD)

Romeo + Juliet

directed by Baz Luhrmann
(see film clip
on the Class Video DVD)

3. You are going to compare and contrast film versions of *Romeo and Juliet*. Watch the two clips for the first time.
 - a. Which part of the story do the two clips show?
 - b. Compare the settings of the two versions — how are they similar and how are they different?

In more detail

Composition in a frame

4. Look at the two images based on the two films.



◀ A still from Franco Zeffirelli's *Romeo and Juliet* (UK-Italy, 1968) starring Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey.



▶ Claire Danes in Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (USA, 1996).

- a. How have the set and the actors been placed to create pleasing compositions? Choose the correct alternatives.
- a. In the still taken from Zeffirelli's production, the actors / objects have been placed on either side of an imaginary horizontal / vertical line which divides the frame in half / three. Their two faces / hands meet on the vertical dividing line creating a kind of mirror image with harmonious symmetrical / asymmetrical balance.
- b. In the photograph, the actress creates a graceful vertical / diagonal across the frame. Her body leans right / left while her face looks to the left / right creating tension in the composition. The image also has a great sense of depth/movement provided by the sharp focused / unfocused foregrounding of the actress and the focused / unfocused, hazy background.
- b. In the first still, Romeo and Juliet are looking at each other. In the second image, Juliet is perhaps checking if she and Romeo are being watched. How do the two compositions complement their content?

5. Watch the clips again. Pause the DVD now and then and comment on the composition in the frame. Use these words.

foreground
background
triangular structure
diagonal/vertical/horizontal line
characters/actors
objects
set

Conclusions

6. Which of the two versions did you prefer? Say why referring to their content, settings, costumes and compositions in the frames.