



**SHAKESPEARE-VR**  
*virtual reality in humanities education*

## ***SWEET SORROW: ROMEO AND JULIET IN VIRTUAL REALITY*** **LESSON 1.1**

Authors: Dr. Stephen Wittek and Elizabeth Dieterich

Text: William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* [Act 3, Scene 5: “The Bedroom Scene”]

Overview: In this lesson, students will study the physical aspects of Elizabethan theater, watch clips of *Romeo and Juliet*, and perform Juliet’s part on the Blackfriars stage. It combines the experience *Sweet Sorrow: Romeo and Juliet in Virtual Reality* with a virtual documentary of Blackfriars Playhouse and a filmed production of the ‘bedroom scene’ from *Romeo and Juliet*. The goal of the lesson is to guide students toward an ability to identify and assess the functions of space, medium, and performance choices in Shakespearean drama.

Ideal class size: 9 students; this number could be increased to 12 or 15 by adding virtual reality headsets.

Time: 1.5 hrs.; time could be reduced by instructing the students to complete the pre- and post-lesson activity exercises outside of class.

Materials:

- *Sweet Sorrow* Worksheet 1 (attached below)
- 6 virtual reality headsets that can access the following media:
  - VR tour of the Blackfriars Theater available via YouTube (4.5 minutes)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2kG356s\\_6A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2kG356s_6A)
  - VR production of *Sweet Sorrow* available via SideQuest VR (~7-8 minutes)  
<https://sidequestvr.com/app/10887/sweet-sorrow-romeo-juliet-in-virtual-reality>
- Text of *Romeo and Juliet* (attached below)
- Personal laptops and headphones for each student so they can access [shx-vr.com](http://shx-vr.com) and watch The Shakespeare’s Globe production of *Romeo and Juliet* (3.5 minutes) via YouTube:  
[https://youtu.be/OFFGrm\\_MYv0](https://youtu.be/OFFGrm_MYv0)

## LESSON

- Introduce the basics of virtual reality headsets: how the controllers work, how to navigate to the media, and how to initiate the media. (5 minutes.)
- Instruct all students to open the *Sweet Sorrow* Worksheet 1 on their personal laptops; review Worksheet 1. (5 minutes.)
- Divide the class into three groups of three (see chart below); ensure there is a separate, large-enough space for engaging with the VR program.

Each group will watch the virtual reality tour of the Blackfriars Playhouse and play through the *Sweet Sorrow* VR program while the other students re-read Act 3, Scene 5 of *Romeo and Juliet*, or view the same scene from the Shakespeare’s Globe 2010 production on their laptops. As they cycle through the stations, they will complete Worksheet 1.

- Progress through the stations:
  - 1. Virtual Reality Station**
    - a. Virtual tour of the Blackfriars Theatre
      - i. Students should access the video on YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2kG356s\\_6A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-2kG356s_6A) (4:31)
    - b. *Sweet Sorrow: Romeo and Juliet in Virtual Reality* (~7-8 minutes)
      - i. Students should access the preloaded media on their from SideQuest VR: <https://sidequestvr.com/app/10887/sweet-sorrow-romeo-juliet-in-virtual-reality>
      - ii. Students should have enough personal space to deliver their lines aloud comfortably; they can sit and perform the scene or stand if space allows.
  - 2. Text Station & Worksheet Part 1**
    - a. Students should re-read the “Bedroom Scene” (3.5) from *Romeo and Juliet* and complete the “Text Station” portion of Worksheet 1.
  - 3. Theater Station & Worksheet Part 2**
    - a. Students should watch the “Bedroom Scene” (3:30) from the Shakespeare’s Globe 2010 production of *Romeo and Juliet* and complete the “Theater Station” portion of Worksheet 1.
- Following their time at each station, students will answer response questions on Worksheet 1.
- After all students have cycled through all three stations, they should complete the post-activity section of Worksheet 1.
- Review students’ responses to the post-activity exercise during a full-class discussion.

## SCHEDULE

00:00 – 00:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce the basics of VR headsets</li> <li>• Introduce the Lesson 1.1 worksheet</li> <li>• Divide the class into 3 groups</li> </ul>		
	<b>GROUP A</b>	<b>GROUP B</b>	<b>GROUP C</b>
00:10 – 00:25	VR Station: Blackfriars Tour & <i>Sweet Sorrow</i>	Theatre Station: Globe <i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i> and <b>Part 2</b> of Worksheet 1	Text Station: <i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i> 3.5 and <b>Part 1</b> of Worksheet 1
00:25– 00:40	Text Station: <i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i> 3.5 and <b>Part 1</b> of Worksheet 1	VR Station: Blackfriars Tour & <i>Sweet Sorrow</i>	Theatre Station: Globe <i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i> and <b>Part 2</b> of Worksheet 1
00:40– 0:55	Theatre Station: Globe <i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i> and <b>Part 2</b> of Worksheet 1	Text Station: <i>Romeo &amp; Juliet</i> 3.5 and <b>Part 1</b> of Worksheet 1	VR Station: Blackfriars Tour & <i>Sweet Sorrow</i>
0:55 – 01:10	Work on post-activity section of Worksheet 1.		
01:10 – 01:30	Discuss responses to post-activity exercise.		