

Sample Critical Question

Why do the first lines of dialogue between Romeo and Juliet (1.5.94-108) take the form of a sonnet?

Sample Informal Outline

Working Thesis: The sonnet-dialogue Romeo and Juliet share when they first meet demonstrates how well matched the two lovers are and helps dramatize how quickly they develop a sense of intimacy.

- **Alternate View:** most people won't even *notice* that R&J are speaking a sonnet
 - Even if you don't consciously notice it, it can have an effect on you, like subliminal advertising.
 - Actors will know about the sonnet and use it in their performance.
- **Sharing a sonnet makes R&J seem like they were made for each other.**
 - Trading lines back and forth makes R&J seem like an old couple who finish each other's sentences.
 - Juliet's replies make her seem just as clever and quick-witted as Romeo; they make a good couple.
 - By analogy, R&J fit together like the parts of a sonnet: the parts are greater than the whole.
- **The progression of the shared sonnet demonstrates how quickly R&J fall in love.**
 - The sonnet begins with the couple holding hands and ends in a kiss.
 - Units get progressively smaller (first quatrains, then couplets, then single lines, then a shared line) which makes it feel like they are literally getting closer to each other.