

# CT & Shakespeare

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June 15th, 2026  
2PM



# CT & SHAKESPEARE

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# About Me

- M.Lit./MFA in Shakespearean Literature & Performance from Mary Baldwin University
- Studied with members of the RSC including Cecily Berry while at the O'Neill Center National Theatre Institute
- Worked professionally with Tailgate Shakespeare, the American Shakespeare Center, & the June Bug Center
- 17 years in public education; from running the Floyd County High School Theatre Department to teaching CS at Northeastern Middle School



01

## Data Analysis

Creating visualizations from textual evidence

03

## Bonus: AI

Shakespeare as a data set

02

## CT

Using the CT pillars of abstraction, algorithms, decomposition, & pattern recognition (plus coding)

04

## Resources

The take & bake





. . .but. . .why?

Why should we—and *HOW*  
can we—approach  
Shakespearean literature with  
Computational Thinking?



01

# Data Analysis

Pattern Recognition in  
Shakespearean Literature



“My only love sprung from  
my only hate!”

—William Shakespeare  
(*R&J* I.v.152)



# Romeo & Juliet

*Data Visualizations of Shakespeare's Use of Language*

**Love**

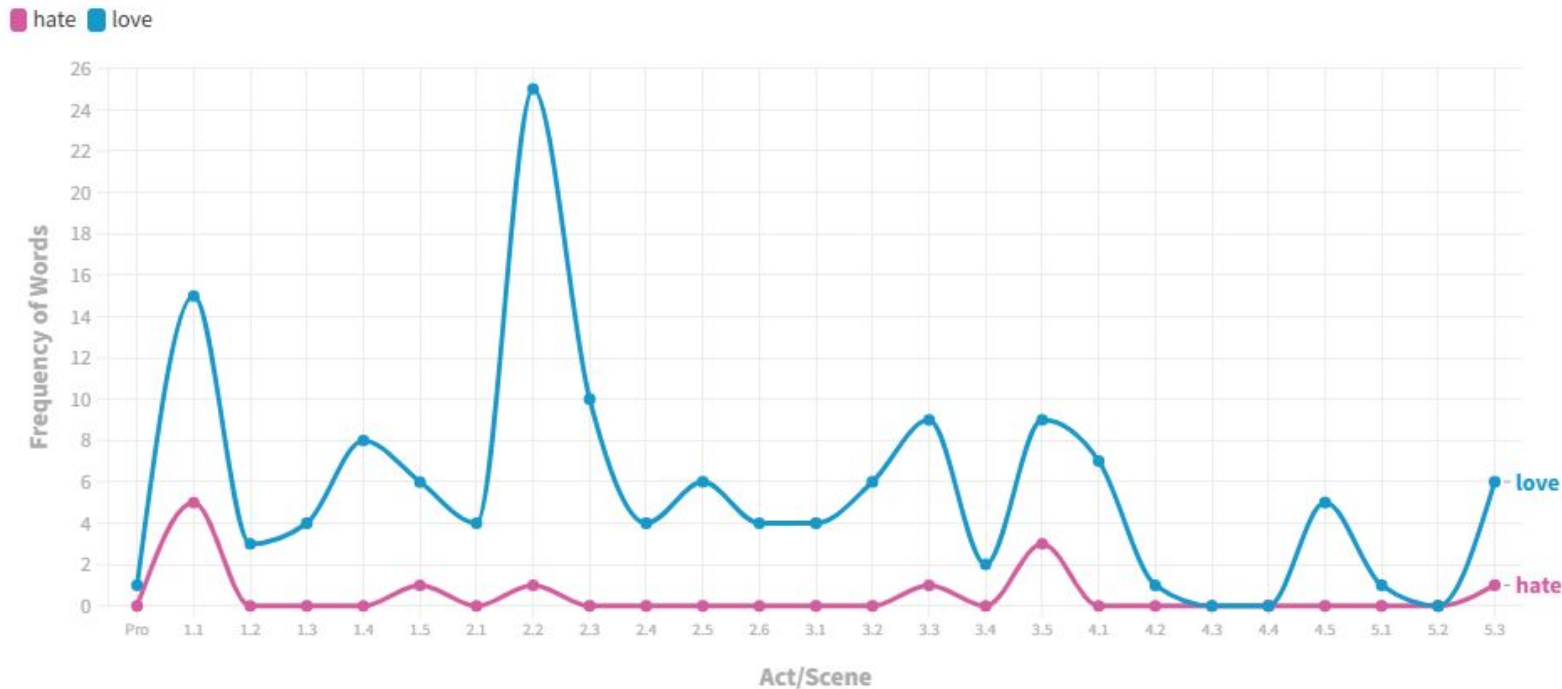


**Hate**

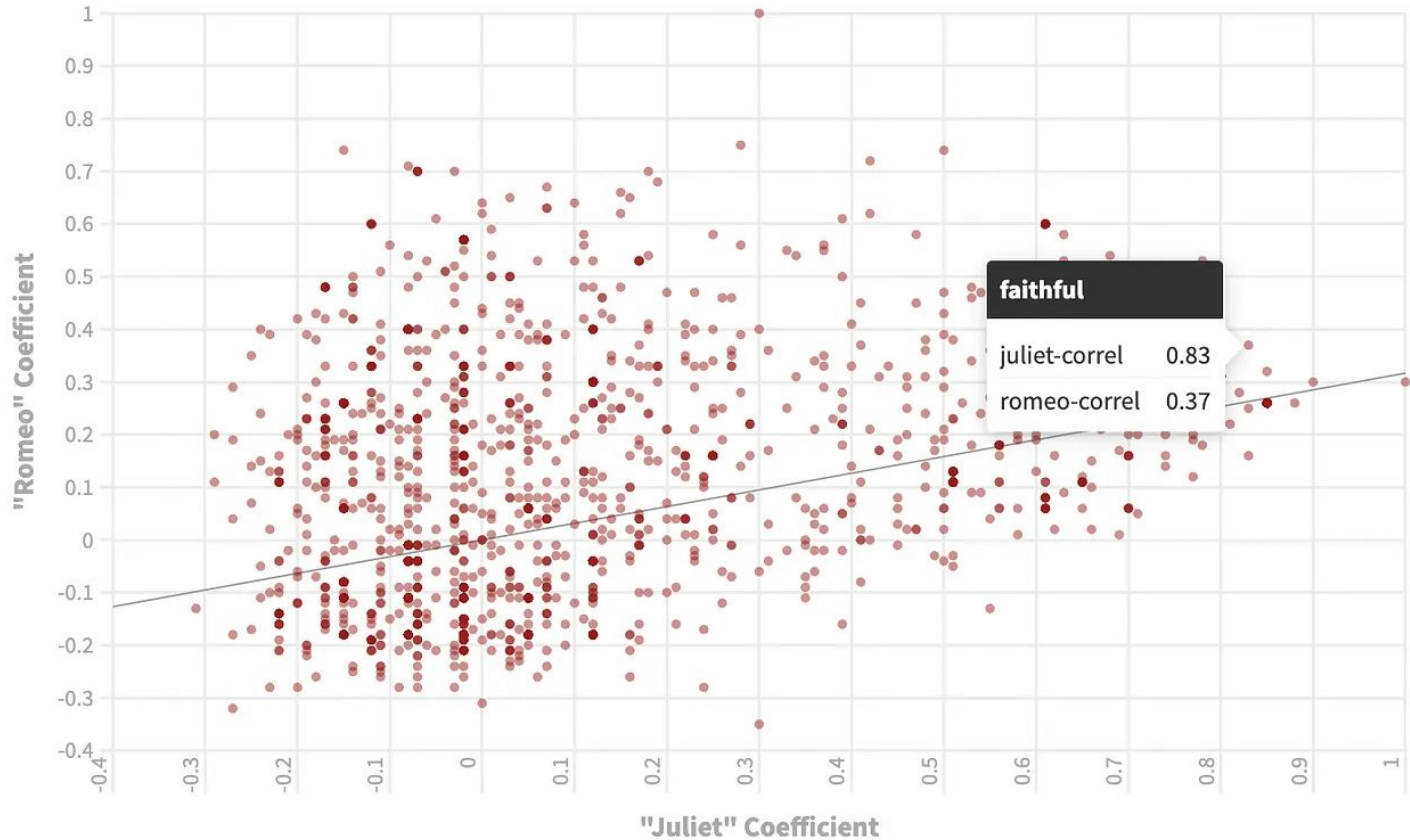


# Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

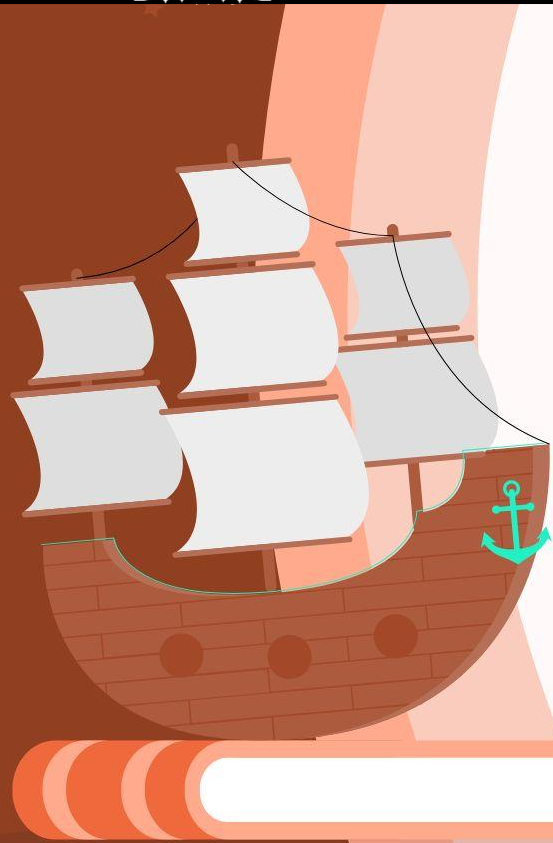
love |x| hate |x| Enter up to 4 words



## Which Words Correlate Most Strongly with "Romeo" and "Juliet"?







02

Computational Thinking

Abstraction, Algorithms  
♥ (Coding), Decomposition,  
Pattern Recognition



# What is Computational Thinking?

Per CMU's Center for Computational Thinking

“Computational thinking is a way of solving problems, designing systems, and understanding human behavior that draws on concepts fundamental to computer science. To flourish in today's world, computational thinking has to be a fundamental part of the way people think and understand the world.”

**Like acting in Shakespeare!**

**Like reading Shakespeare!**

**Shakespeare!**



# Abstraction

**Per CMU's Center for Computational Thinking:**

“The most important and high-level thought process in computational thinking is the abstraction process. [...] Abstraction gives us the power to scale and deal with complexity.” (Wing)



**Classic Example:**



# Pattern Recognition

We've already explored this with the idea of Data Analysis, but to truly decode Shakespearean literature, we need to talk about Iambic Pentameter.

**Iambic Pentameter  
Basics Handout**



**IAMB • IC**

an unstressed  
syllable followed by  
a stressed syllable

related to

**PENTA • METER**

5

measurement  
(each line)



# Kiss. . . or Kill?

One of the ways that Shakespeare codes is by purposefully upending his typically regular iambic pentameter. This creates a version of the famous “Kiss or Kill.”

Let's look at some examples.



Kiss. . . or  
Kill?



R&J 3.I.78-94

Celebrating Brilliance

**MERCUTIO** Good king of cats, nothing but one of your nine lives, [...] Make haste, lest mine be about your ears ere it be out.

**TYBALT** I am for you. *He draws.*

**ROMEO** Gentle Mercutio, put thy rapier up.

**MERCUTIO** Come, sir, your passado. *They fight.*

**ROMEO** Draw, Benvolio, beat down their weapons.  
*Romeo draws.*

Gentlemen, for shame forbear this outrage!  
Tybalt! Mercutio! The Prince expressly hath  
Forbid this bandying in Verona streets.

Hold, Tybalt! Good Mercutio!

*Romeo attempts to beat down their rapiers.*

*Tybalt stabs Mercutio.*

**PETRUCHIO** Away, Tybalt!

*Tybalt, Petruchio, and their followers exit.*

**MERCUTIO** I am hurt.

A plague o' both houses! I am sped.



Kiss. . . or  
Kill?



R&J 3.I.135-143

### **TYBALT**

Thou wretched boy that didst consort him here  
Shalt with him hence.

### **ROMEO**

This shall determine that.  
*They fight. Tybalt falls.*

### **BENVOLIO**

Romeo, away, begone!  
The citizens are up, and Tybalt slain.  
Stand not amazed. The Prince will doom thee death  
If thou art taken. Hence, be gone, away.

### **ROMEO**

O, I am Fortune's fool!

### **BENVOLIO**

Why dost thou stay?



Kiss. . . or  
Kill?



R&J 3.v.42-53

### ROMEO

Farewell, farewell. One kiss and I'll descend.  
*They kiss, and Romeo descends.*

### JULIET

Art thou gone so? Love, lord, ay husband, friend!  
I must hear from thee every day in the hour,  
For in a minute there are many days.  
O, by this count I shall be much in years  
Ere I again behold my Romeo.

**ROMEO** Farewell.

I will omit no opportunity  
That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.

### JULIET

O, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?

### ROMEO

I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve  
For sweet discourses in our times to come.



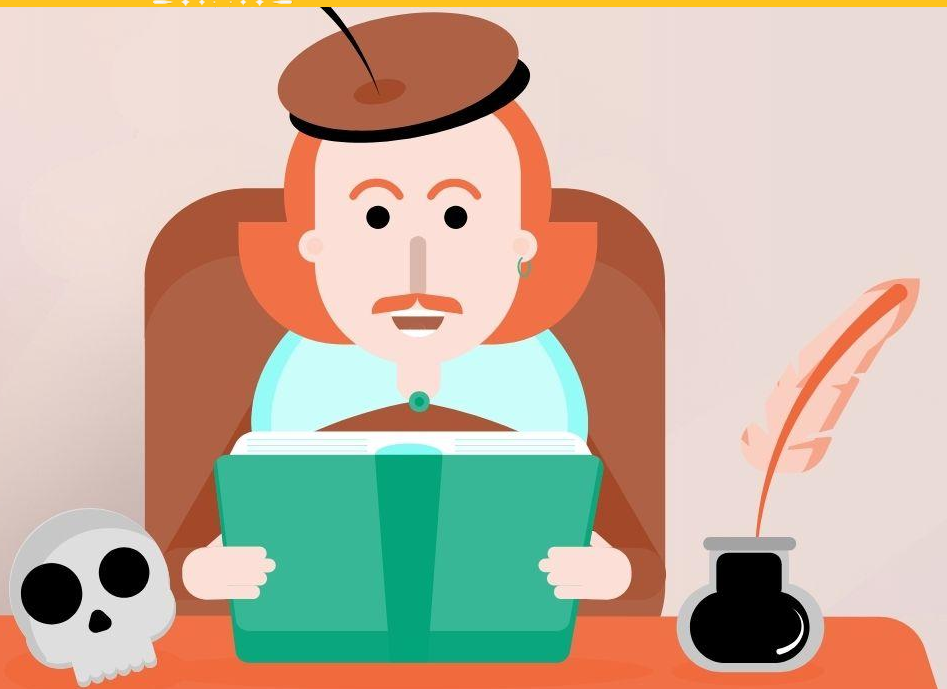
# Decomposition



**Decomposition** is probably already a major component of how you teach Shakespearean literature! All close reading is an exercise in breaking down a text into smaller and smaller parts—sometimes one word at a time—and then analyzing both the parts and how they fit together to form a whole.

Let's add an **algorithmic** thinking approach and interpret Shakespeare's "**code**" the same way that an actor would!





Lesson Plan

Interpreting  
Shakespeare's  
Code

Student  
Handouts



03

Bonus! Q1

It has to be in everything, right?



# Shakespeare as an AI Data Set

Let's explore using  
Shakespearean Literature  
as the foundation for a  
data set, but we'll keep it:

- Unplugged
- Interactive
- Less abstracted

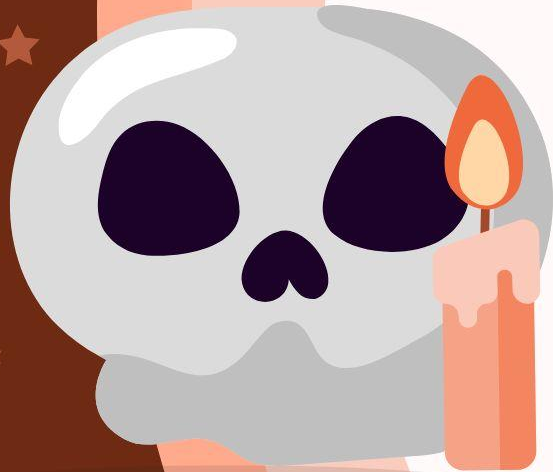
## Shakespearean Data Set Resources



04

# Resources

As promised, the take & bake!



# Resources



- [Iambic Pentameter Basics](#)
- [Coding Shakespeare Lesson Plan](#)
- [Coding Shakespeare Handouts](#)
- [Shakespearean Data Set Resources \(AI\)](#)
- [A/B Scene Printable](#)



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# Thanks

Do you have any questions?  
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