

CHORUS

Two households, both alike in
dignity
(In fair Verona, where we lay our
scene),
From ancient grudge break to new
mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil
hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these
two foes
A pair of star-crossed lovers take
their life,
Whose misadventured piteous
overthrows
Doth with their death bury their
parents' strife.
The fearful passage of their
death-marked love
And the continuance of their
parents' rage,
Which, but their children's end,
naught could remove,
Is now the two hours' traffic of our
stage—
The which, if you with patient ears
attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall
strive to mend.

Shakespearean version

CHORUS

In the beautiful city of Verona,
where our story takes place, a
long-standing hatred between
two families erupts into new
violence, and citizens stain
their hands with the blood of
their fellow citizens. Two
unlucky children of these
enemy families become lovers
and commit suicide. Their
unfortunate deaths put an end
to their parents' feud. For the
next two hours, we will watch
the story of their doomed love
and their parents' anger, which
nothing but the children's
deaths could stop. If you listen
to us patiently, we'll make up
for everything we've left out in
this prologue onstage.

Modern Day Translation

A prologue is an introduction to a play which tells the listener/viewer what the play is about, here is the prologue for Romeo and Juliet, it is an *iambic pentameter* (14 lines of 10 syllables each in an ABAB pattern until the last 2 lines which are a rhyming couplet).

Two similar households,
In beautiful Verona where our scene begins,
An outbreak of fighting from an old grudge,
Has caused citizens to have each other's blood on their hands.
From these two enemies,
Two unlucky lovers commit suicide,
Their untimely end overthrows,
With their death their parents' hatred is taken away.
The time of their doomed love,
And the continued hatred between their parents',
Could not be removed except for with the death of their children,
This is what will be on our stage for two hours,
For those of you who are patient,
We will fill you in on more details.