

An extract from Sophia's Final Assignment

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Year Group: Year 9 (2024-2025)

Scholars Programme Course: "Shakespeare or not Shakespeare? That is the question".

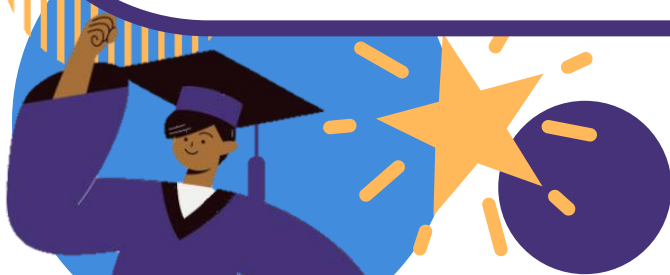
Assignment Title / Question: Which version of Romeo and Juliet is the most reliable?



Prior to the death of Shakespeare in 1613, during the performance of the play King Henry VIII, an explosive effect caused a fire that burnt down the entirety of his playhouse, the Globe. Shakespeare will have had handwritten manuscripts in the Globe. These will have all be lost in the fire. So close to Shakespeare's death, it is impossible for him to have rewritten the lost plays. This meant when Condell and Heminges collected the plays to publish into the First Folio, that the copies were from other sources.

With no idea of the source of Quarto Three and that the copy was never looked at by Shakespeare, we have no true proof to say that this source was anything matching his intent. After the fire, many of his original ideas will have been lost and only the ideas of his plays left. This left opportunity for outside influences and the chance for ideas to be turned into completely different ones. Therefore, I believe that this is the least trustworthy source out of the three.

The First Quarto is the most reliable of the three. Mooney's theory tells us that Shakespeare himself edited the play to his liking and incorporating the most crucial ideas to him, presenting the purpose of the play without it being compromised by others' ideas. The play is clear to perform and to follow whilst watching. It is engaging to the audience as it is a total of two hours. It also conveys Shakespeare's ideas and intent as he edited it himself. This is unlike Quarto Two, which is unreliable. Although it came directly from Shakespeare himself, the printed copy contains many inaccuracies and false starts. The possibility of Shakespeare's intent being lost through the mistakes proves this.



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