



→ Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn dancing in *Romeo and Juliet* by Sergej Prokofiev at The Royal Ballet in London.

What is true love?

The story of *Romeo and Juliet* tells us that among the strong passions that characterise a teenager's life, love is definitely one of the most powerful ones. But what is love exactly? Can we define it? And how can we identify 'true love' when we feel it?

FIRST Reading and Use of English | Part 3

1 For questions (1-8), read the text below. Use the word given in capitals at the end of some of the lines to form a word that fits in the gap in the same line. There is an example at the beginning (0 = throughout).

The concept of 'true love' has fascinated poets, philosophers and ordinary people **0**throughout..... history. And one of the most celebrated, world-famous examples is, of course, brought to us through Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*. True love is not necessarily a source of happiness as the tragic fate of the young couple from Verona so movingly illustrates.

It is not easy to offer a simple **1** but we can identify a number of characteristics that are common to all loving **2**

Loving partners treat each other with kindness and patience even when they **3** about things. Mutual trust, based on **4** and honesty, is a necessary foundation for love and this must also be accompanied by empathy, the **5** to understand each other's feelings. If we truly love someone, we offer them unconditional support both in moments of **6** and in times of **7** When we have found 'the one', we can feel safe and without fear of **8** or judgement.

- THROUGH
- DEFINE
- RELATE
- AGREE
- SINCERE
- ABLE
- HAPPY / DIFFICULT
- CRITIC

REFLECT & DISCUSS

2 Answer the following questions.

1. Do you agree with all the attributes of 'true love' mentioned above?
2. Is there anything that could be defined as 'false love'? What are its characteristics?
3. What is your own definition of love?

Share your ideas with the rest of the class.

WRITING Lab SHORT ESSAY

3 Literature is filled with references to love in all of its nuances. Can you think of at least three examples of literary works that give a clear definition of 'true love'? What do they have in common? How do they differ from each other? Share your ideas in a short text.

TAKE ACTION

4 Use the Internet to find three visual representations of 'true love'. How many of these representations contain explicit or implicit references to *Romeo and Juliet*? Share your ideas with the rest of the class.



The sorrow of absence

The poem you are going to read reveals the surprising effects of being away from one's lover. It is written by the American poet Aimee Nezhukumatathil.

When I'm Away from You, I Feel like the Second-Place Winner in a Bee-Wearing Contest

who practiced all year, only
to lose to a guy whose

every inch was covered
in hum¹. And I am in awe²

5 to learn one cheeky bee³
clambered⁴ into the winner's

sugared ear⁵, another
slid into his nostril, and still-

he didn't flip⁶. Just calmly
10 waited for the bell to ring

a victory. But even
fifty-seven pounds⁷ of bees

can't stop the music I hear
when I return to you, the music

15 I hear when you walk near me.
Like I'm always carried in enough

good sting and thrum⁸ to remember
our life. I'll always return home

to you-my honeycomb⁹, my sweet-

20 my one faithful and true buzz.

- 1 **hum**: ronizio (sineddoche per 'api')
- 2 **Am I in awe**: sono sbalordito
- 3 **cheeky bee**: ape birichina
- 4 **clambered**: si è insinuata
- 5 **sugared ear**: orecchio zuccherato
- 6 **he didn't flip**: non ha fatto una piega
- 7 **fifty-seven pounds**: 26 kg
- 8 **thrum**: ronizio (onomatopeico)
- 9 **honeycomb**: favo

Aimee Nezhukumatathil (1974-) is an American poet and writer. Born with a mix of Indian and Filipino origins, in her poetry she explores topics such as love, the sense of loss, and ownership.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

1 The poet describes love as a strong mix of 'pleasure' and 'pain'.

1. Do you agree with this view? Why/Why not?
2. Do you think Romeo and Juliet would share this view? Why/Why not?



SELF-AWARENESS

REFLECT ON YOURSELF

2 Complete the following.
Be creative!

1. When I'm away from you, I feel like ...
2. When I return to you, I hear ...

TAKE ACTION FAR BUT NEAR

3 Use the Internet to find a song that expresses how it feels to be away from one's lover. Bring it to school, share it with your classmates and comment on it, identifying similarities and differences between Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Nezhukumatathil's poem.

