



## *Study Guide 2021-2022*

# Much Ado About Nothing

by William Shakespeare

### Florida Standards

#### Language Arts

LAFS.910.RL.1: Key Ideas and Details  
LAFS.910.RH.1: Key Ideas and Details  
LAFS.1112.SL.1: Comprehension and Collaboration  
LAFS.910.W.1: Text Types and Purposes  
LAFS.1112.RL.1: Key Ideas and Details  
LAFS.910.RL.3: Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

#### Theater

TH.912.F.2: Careers in and related to the arts  
TH.68.S.1: The arts are inherently experiential.

**PG-13**

Elizabethan curse words, drugs are referenced, stage violence and death using swords

Most appropriate for Grade 8 and up. Children under 5 will not be admitted to the theater.

# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *Table of Contents*

<b>Introduction</b> . . . . .	3
<b>Enjoying Live Theater</b>	
Theater is a Team Sport . . . . .	4
The Actor/Audience Relationship . . . . .	5
<b>About the Play</b>	
Plot Summary . . . . .	6
Meet the Characters . . . . .	7
Meet the Playwright . . . . .	8
Historical Context . . . . .	11
<b>Lesson Plan: Page to Stage</b> . . . . .	12
<b>Activities</b>	
Shakespeare Taboo . . . . .	15
Paraphrasing . . . . .	19
Write a Review . . . . .	20
<b>Discussion &amp; Themes</b> . . . . .	21

# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *An Introduction*

Educators:

Welcome back to what we hope will be a return to a more normal school year! The past year has been difficult for all who love arts education, and we are eager to meet your needs for the 2021-2022 school year in whatever format works best for you and your students.

We understand that Field Trips may not be possible this school year, due to social distancing and bus scheduling; however, for those of you able to come see a show, we intend to continue live Signature Series performances. We are also looking into streaming or recording options, for those of you unable to leave the school.

We hope to be able to return to your classrooms this year for live workshops, but we will continue to offer Virtual versions of our popular workshops, Shakespeare Alive and Books Alive, as well. Also, we have live, interactive performances of Aesop's Fables which can stream into your classroom using whatever platform works best for you and your school.

Our hope is that Orlando Shakes will continue to meet your needs and become an essential partner in bringing theatre arts to your students for years to come.

If you have an idea for a program or delivery system that would make our partnership easier, please let us know. We now know that anything is possible, and that we as arts educators inherently bring our talent and creativity to every challenge we face.

We look forward to working with you this year and learning how we can serve you and your students.

Thank you for your tremendous work in nurturing our audiences of tomorrow.

Anne Hering  
Director of Education

Brandon Yagel  
Education Coordinator



# Much Ado About Nothing

## Enjoying Live Theater

### Theater is a Team Sport

The **Playwright** writes the script. Sometimes it is from an original idea and sometimes it is adapted from a book or story. The Playwright decides what the characters say, and gives the Designers guidelines on how the play should look.

The **Director** creates the vision for the production and works closely with the actors, costume, set and lighting designers to make sure everyone tells the same story.



Sound Designer -  
Britt Sanducky  
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Actors** use their bodies and voices to bring the author's words and the director's ideas to life on the stage.

The **Designers** imagine and create the lights, scenery, props, costumes and sound that will compliment and complete the director's vision.

The **Stage Manager** assists the director during rehearsals by recording their instructions and making sure the actors and designers understand these ideas. The Stage Manager then runs the show during each performance by calling cues for lights and sound, as well as entrances and exits.



Stage Manager -Stacey  
Renee Norwood  
Photo: Rob Jones



Costume Designer -  
Denise Warner  
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Shop** and **Stage Crew** build the set, props and costumes according to the designer's plans. The Stage Crew sets the stage with props and furniture, assists the actors with costume changes and operates sound, lighting and stage machinery during each performance.



Creative Team of The Merry Wives of  
Windsor  
Photo: Rob Jones

The **Front of House Staff** welcomes you to the theater, takes your tickets, helps you find your seat and answers any question you may have on the day of performance.

The **Theater** is where it all takes place. Orlando Shakespeare Theater In Partnership with UCF is the only professional, classical theater company in Central Florida, reaching students and audiences in the surrounding eight counties.

### Mission:

To enrich our community with engaging professional theater, inspiring educational experiences, and thought-provoking new plays.

# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *Enjoying Live Theater*

### **The Actor/Audience Relationship**

The Audience is the reason Live Theater exists. At Orlando Shakes, we cherish the Actor/Audience relationship, the unique give and take that exists during a performance which makes the audience an ACTIVE participant in the event. The actors see the audience just as the audience sees the actors, and every laugh, snuffle, chuckle and gasp the audience makes effects the way the actor plays his next moment. We want you to be engaged and to live the story with us!



Photo: Rob Jones

There are certain Conventions of the Theatrical Event, like, when the lights go down you know that the show is about to start, and that the audience isn't encouraged to come and go during a performance. Here are some other tips to help you and your classmates be top notch audience members:

- Please make sure to turn off your cell phones. And NO TEXTING!
- Please stay in your seat. Use the restroom before you take your seat and stay in your seat unless there is an emergency.
- Please do not eat or drink in the theater.

### **Talkback**

After the performance, the actors will stay on stage for about 10 minutes to hear your comments and answer any questions you have about the play and the production. We'd love to hear what you felt about the play, what things were clear or unclear to you, and hear your opinions about what the play means. This last portion of the Actor/Audience Relationship is so important to help us better serve you and enrich your artistic experience.

Consider the Themes and Key Questions above and ask yourself:

1. What Key Questions did the play answer?
2. Do you agree with everything the play said about these themes?
3. How did the actors, directors, and designers all address these themes?
4. What opinion did the artists bring to the process, did those opinions change throughout the process (designing, rehearsing, performing) and how did that impact their work?



# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *About the Play*

### *Summary*



Don Pedro and his men return after a war to stay at Leonato's house. Benedick continues a prickly relationship with Leonato's niece, Beatrice. Both solemnly declare they will never marry. Claudio falls in love with Hero, Leonato's daughter. Don Pedro agrees to woo Hero for Claudio, at a reception that evening. Don John, Pedro's bastard brother, plots with his two men, Borachio and Conrade to do some wickedness.

At the party, Claudio is told by Don John that Pedro is wooing for himself, but Claudio soon learns that this is not so, and that Hero is his. Further antagonism between Beatrice and Benedick leads Pedro and the others to trick them into falling in love with each other. Leonato, Claudio and Don Pedro let Benedick overhear them speak of how much Beatrice loves him. Later, Hero and Maria let Beatrice overhear their talk about

how much Benedick loves her. Both Benedick and Beatrice find they have feelings for each other, and appear love-struck to their friends. Meanwhile, Don John arranges for Borachio to woo Hero's maid, Margaret, at Hero's window. He informs Pedro and Claudio that Hero is going to be unfaithful that night, and arranges with them to be present. They see Borachio calling Margaret 'Hero', and are taken in.

The Watch, led by Dogberry and Verges, prepare to carry out their evening duties. Borachio is overheard telling Conrade about the plot, and they are arrested. Dogberry and Verges begin an interrogation, but the time of the wedding arrives before they can reach any conclusions. There, Claudio and Pedro reveal the 'truth' about Hero. She faints, and they leave. Don John flees the estate. Leonato harangues Hero, while she protests her innocence. The priest supports her, and suggests they pretend she has died until the truth is discovered. Beatrice and Benedick declare their feelings for each other, and Beatrice makes Benedick vow to kill Claudio for shaming Hero.

Leonato and Antonio offer to fight with Claudio, then learn the truth from the Watch. Dogberry and Verges bring Borachio and Conrade to confess before Claudio and Pedro, and Claudio begs forgiveness. Leonato demands that Claudio mourns Hero, and in recompense marries his brother's daughter—who happens to look exactly like Hero. Claudio agrees, and at the ceremony encounters the real Hero when she is unveiled. Beatrice and Benedick stop denying each other and agree to be married. As they are all about to dance, they receive news of Don John's capture.

[playshakespeare.com](http://playshakespeare.com)

# Much Ado About Nothing

## About the Play

### Characters



**Don Pedro** is the Prince of Aragon. He has just won a war against his illegitimate half-brother Don John. He reconciles himself to his brother, though he doesn't speak to him much and may merely be keeping him close to keep an eye on him.

**Don John** is a bastard, in both the legal and ethical senses of the term. The essence of his character is that he is evil.

**Claudio** is a Count of Don Pedro's suite, who has distinguished himself in the recent war. He is from Florence, though he has an emotional uncle living in Messina.

**Benedick** is a gentleman of Padua serving in Don Pedro's army. He wears a beard at the beginning of the play. According to Beatrice, he adopts a new best friend once a month, possibly out of a concern for money; his present one is Claudio.

**Leonato**, the governor of Messina, is an older man, with a white beard. He has a daughter, Hero, and is the guardian of an orphaned niece, Beatrice.

**Antonio** is Leonato's brother. An old man, he has a tendency to wag his head in a characteristic way. He apparently has a son who provides for the music in Leonato's house.

**Balthasar** is an attendant of Don Pedro's and a musician. A singer, he most likely plays the lute to accompany himself.

**Conrade** is one of Don John's followers. He attempts to cheer Don John up and to convince him that he should be, at the least, happy that Don Pedro has taken him back, and use that favor to pursue his own ends.

**Borachio** is one of Don John's followers. His name tells us well enough that he is a drunkard. He also has, however, a crafty mind.

**Friar Francis** is in the tradition of Romeo and Juliet's Friar Laurence; both are long-winded, well-meaning, somewhat interfering gentlemen who think it is a fine idea to make people believe a young girl is dead.

**Dogberry** is the constable of the Watch, whose job is to patrol the streets of Messina at night and keep order. Dogberry has very few doubts about himself.

**Verges** is the Headborough, and Dogberry's partner as commander of the Watch. He is an old man, and seems to be completely under Dogberry's thumb.

**The Sexton** is in charge of examining the men detained by the Watch, and it is his misfortune that the Watch should be commanded by Dogberry.

**Hero** is Leonato's daughter. A sweet and obedient girl overshadowed by her cousin Beatrice, she almost never speaks in her elders' presence.

**Beatrice** is Leonato's orphaned niece. She appears to be somewhat taller than Hero, as well as older.

**Margaret** is Hero's waiting-gentlewoman. A fashion-obsessed flirt who requires good dancing abilities in her men, she is witty enough to hold her own against both Benedick and Beatrice in certain circumstances.

**Ursula** is one of Hero's waiting-gentlewomen.

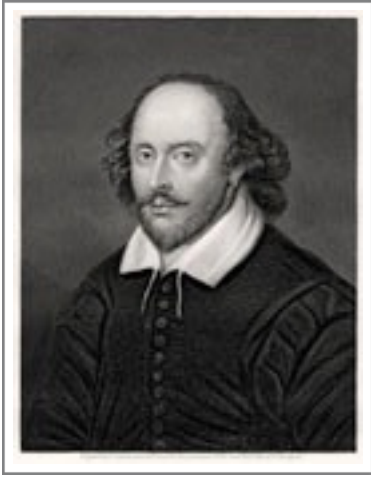
**The Messenger** is sent by Don Pedro to announce his coming to Leonato.

**The Watchmen** are part of the neighbourhood watch that Dogberry commands, charged with patrolling the streets of Messina at night.

# Much Ado About Nothing

## About the Play

### Meet the Playwright



William Shakespeare is a mystery. He never went to college, only the local grammar school, but ended up writing the most famous plays in the history of the world. How did it happen? Nobody really knows.

We know very little about Shakespeare's personal life, his childhood and his marriage when you think about the impact he's had on our world. We have none of Shakespeare's letters, diaries, or original manuscripts. All we have is his signature on a couple of legal documents. In fact, the lack of information on him has made a lot of people argue that he never really wrote all those plays or even existed at all!

Never forget, Shakespeare wrote his plays to be **PERFORMED** not read. Never sit down to **READ** one of his plays if you don't know it. Get up and try **ACTING IT OUT**. You'll be surprised how much you'll understand. Reading Shakespeare is **ALWAYS** hard, Performing him is **EASY**.

Will wrote over 40 plays, but only 37 have survived. He wrote every kind of story you can think of- tragedies, comedies, histories. 22 of his plays were about **WAR**. Guess he had human nature down... In his plays you can find teenagers fighting with their parents, teenagers running away, teenagers falling in love, ghosts, gods, witches,

drunks, murderers, a woman caressing her lover's body minus its head, a woman caressing her lover's head minus its body, weddings, funerals, death by stabbing, suffocation, poison, decapitation, spiking, hanging, execution, being made into a meat-pie, and drowning in a vat of wine. The point is that Shakespeare did it ALL!

Everybody went to see Shakespeare's plays: children, peasants, royalty, merchants, every kind of person from every social group and clique. It was the one place where a beggar could rub elbows with the rich and famous. Remember there were no televisions, no radios, no magazines, and only the beginnings of newspapers. Not that newspapers mattered much considering most people **COULDN'T** read or write! Aside from the plays, there were bear-baitings, cockfights, bull-baitings and if you were lucky, the occasional execution. That was all. Seeing one of his plays was something like a cross between a Magic basketball game and a rock concert. It was noisy, crazy, usually messy, and a whole lot of fun.

#### Shakespeare's Early Years

William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. He died on the exact same day fifty-two years later, in 1616. He lived during what was called the Elizabethan Era because at that time the queen of England was Queen Elizabeth I.

William Shakespeare's father, John Shakespeare, was a glovemaker by trade and ran a 'general store'. He was a prominent citizen in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon and even served as mayor for a term. The very first mention of John Shakespeare is in 1552. He was fined for keeping a 'dunghill' in front of his house. When William was eight years old, his father's fortunes started to decline. His father stopped going to church meetings and town council meetings, and his application for a coat-

of-arms was turned down. A 'coat-of-arms' was an important status symbol in Elizabethan England. Today it would be like the U.S. Government and everybody else in the country recognizing that you and your family were upper class and treating you like you were somebody important. Basically, you got invited to all the 'A-List' parties. Nobody knows why John Shakespeare's mysterious decline occurred.

Shakespeare's mother was Mary Arden, a young lady from a prominent Catholic family. She married John Shakespeare in 1557 and they had seven children. William's older sisters Joan and Margaret died when they were babies. His younger sister Anne died when he was fifteen. The most of what we know about his three younger brothers is the youngest was named Edmund and that he later became an actor in London. Edmund died at age twenty-seven and was buried in London. We don't really know much about Shakespeare's other two brothers.





# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *About the Play*

### *Meet the Playwright*

As far as Shakespeare's education, even less is known. We assume he went to the local public grammar/elementary school in Stratford, but there are no records to prove it. We're also pretty sure he never went to college or university (pretty incredible when you consider Shakespeare invented over 2500 words that we still use everyday- including the words "puke", "eyeball", and "vulnerable"). In fact, after his baptism the next record we have of William Shakespeare is his marriage in 1582 to Anne Hathaway. William was eighteen years old when he married and Anne was twenty-six. Anne was also several months pregnant! Susanna, Shakespeare's first child, was born in 1583. Two years later, Shakespeare and Anne had twins, Judith and Hamnet. Sadly, Hamnet died only eleven years later. There is no record of his cause of death. William was deeply affected by his only son's death and after it spent more time in Stratford, traveling to London only for important theater business.

#### **The London Years**

Nobody knows exactly when William Shakespeare moved to London or how he supported himself once he got there. We do know he was an actor before he was a playwright. Even when he was thriving as a playwright, he still found time to act in his own plays. He played roles such as Adam in *As You Like It* and the ghost of Hamlet's father in *Hamlet*.

In 1589-92, Shakespeare's first plays were all HITS in London. By 1594, Shakespeare's own acting troupe, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, became the premier acting company in London.

In 1598, Shakespeare built his famous theater- The Globe Theater. It was located on the south bank of the Thames River in London. The new theater's motto was "Totus mundus agit

histrionem" or in English instead of Latin "All the world's a stage".

The Globe Theater could accommodate over 3,000 spectators and admission in the early 1600's was one penny. The Globe had twenty sides and was an "open-air" theater, meaning there was no roof in the center. What roof there was, was thatched (made of hay). The rest of the building was made of wood. From above it looked like a large donut. Performances were given every day from 2-5 in the afternoon (so the sunlight wouldn't bother the audience or the actors) except Sunday. The beginning of a show was signaled by three blasts from a trumpet and a flag raised at the same time: black for tragedy, red for history, and white for comedy. Why didn't they just pass out leaflets? Going to plays was considered immoral and advertising for plays was prohibited. Yet, everybody came! Vendors at the shows sold beer, water, oranges, gingerbread, apples, and nuts. All of these were THROWN at the actors if the audience didn't like the show! Audience members also frequently talked back to the actors. For example, if a murderer was sneaking up on somebody, the audience usually screamed out "LOOK BEHIND YOU!"

On June 29, 1613, the Globe Theater burned to the ground. It was during a performance of *Henry the Eighth*. The cannon shots that were fired to 'announce the arrival of the king' during the first act of the play misfired and engulfed the thatched roof in flames. One man's breeches (pants) caught on fire but before he got hurt badly somebody dumped their beer on him and put it out! While the rest of the audience escaped unharmed, The Globe Theater was completely destroyed. Thirty years later, an ordinance (law) was passed to close all theatres. Acting and plays were outlawed because they were considered immoral.

#### **The Later Years**

Back in Stratford, William Shakespeare enjoyed his retirement and his status as 'Gentleman'. He purchased 'New House', the second largest home in Stratford-upon-Avon and often invited his friends and fellow artists over to hang out. One such visit is recorded in the journal of John Ward, a vicar in Stratford. He wrote, "Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Johnson had a merry meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted". Shakespeare indeed died thereafter and was buried in his family's church in Stratford on his birthday in 1616.

In all, Shakespeare had written over 40 plays in two years. Two members of his acting company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, published all the plays they could find in 1623. This collection of 37 of Shakespeare's plays has come to be known as The First Folio. If it had not been for these two men, John Heminges and Henry Condell, we might have no record of William Shakespeare's work and the world as we know it would be a very different place. In the preface to the Folio these men wrote, "We have but collected them (the plays) and done an office to the dead... without ambition either of self-profit or fame; only to keep the memory of so worthy a friend alive, as was our Shakespeare".

Shakespeare's friend and fellow playwright Ben Johnson wrote this about Shakespeare when William died- "... I loved the man, and do honor his memory as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature: had excellent fantasies, brave notions, and gentle expressions..."

# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *About the Play*

### *Meet the Playwright*

#### **Shakespeare's Plays**

1589	<i>Comedy of Errors</i>	1601	<i>Troilus and Cressida</i>
1590	<i>Henry VI, Part II</i> <i>Henry VI, Part III</i>	1602	<i>All's Well That Ends Well</i>
1591	<i>Henry VI, Part I</i>	1604	<i>Othello</i> <i>Measure for Measure</i>
1592	<i>Richard III</i>	1605	<i>King Lear</i> <i>Macbeth</i>
1593	<i>Taming of the Shrew</i> <i>Titus Andronicus</i>	1606	<i>Antony and Cleopatra</i>
1594	<i>Romeo and Juliet</i> <i>Two Gentlemen of Verona</i> <i>Love's Labour's Lost</i>	1607	<i>Coriolanus</i> <i>Timon of Athens</i>
1595	<i>Richard II</i> <i>Midsummer Night's Dream</i>	1608	<i>Pericles</i>
1596	<i>King John</i> <i>Merchant of Venice</i>	1609	<i>Cymbeline</i>
1597	<i>Henry IV, Part I</i> <i>Henry IV, Part II</i>	1610	<i>Winter's Tale</i>
1598	<i>Henry V</i> <i>Much Ado about Nothing</i>	1611	<i>Tempest</i>
1599	<i>Twelfth Night</i> <i>As You Like It</i> <i>Julius Caesar</i>	1612	<i>Henry VIII</i>
1600	<i>Hamlet</i> <i>Merry Wives of Windsor</i>		



# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *Historical Context*

### **Elizabethan Theater**

Statistics from the late 16th century suggest that more than 10% of the population regularly attended plays. The first regular London playhouse, The Theatre, had been built by the actor and carpenter, J. Burbage, in 1576. Actually, it was built just outside the city of London in order to escape the Puritan civic authorities. Up to this time players had been forced to perform mostly in inn yards. In the typical Elizabethan playhouse:

- The overall shape was roughly round or octagonal shaped with an open space in the middle, or an unroofed yard surrounded by one or two galleries.
- The stage was an open platform, jutting out into the center of the yard.
- Under the stage, hidden by drapery, was a cellar with machinery for projecting ghosts and devils through trapdoors.
- Above the stage the first gallery provided an open balcony which could be used for appearances of actors.
- Above the balcony was a hut to house machinery to raise or lower actors or property onto the stage.

The audience could stand around the stage, on three sides, for the payment of a penny. In the galleries, the best places cost as much as sixpence. Depending on the theatre, there were as many as 2,000 to 3,000 places for spectators.

Shakespeare's company, the King's Men, owned and produced their plays in the Globe Theatre, which they opened in 1589. Like many others of its time, it was an open-roofed structure with a jutting stage, surrounded by curving balcony of seats. The stage itself was roofed and had many levels, so that almost any kind of scene could be represented.

There was little in the way of props and scenery. Shakespeare's play often contain prologues apologizing for the poverty of the set and inviting the viewers to use their imaginations. The plays are full of vivid speeches that use words to create the scene for the audience.

In an open theatre, plays were performed during the day with no lighting available beyond natural daylight. In an enclosed theatre, such as the Blackfriars which the King's Men purchased in 1609, evening performances could be given by torch and candlelight. This type of performance was more expensive and attracted a higher class audience.

Theatre companies during Shakespeare's time consisted of male actors only; no women appeared on the stage. Young men dressed in women's clothing played these parts. The theatre was considered too vulgar an environment for women and a temptation to public "immorality." Needless to say, the men were presented with the same temptations, but it was considered more socially acceptable for them. Although an actor could make a good living, the profession was not considered respectable and the association between acting and a "loose" lifestyle is one that lives on today.

# Much Ado About Nothing

## Lesson Plan: Page to Stage

In this lesson, students will read an excerpt from Act II, Scene 3 of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Students will also participate in a Socratic Seminar covering topics such as Shakespeare's use of imagery, comparison/contrast, verbal wordplay and disguise. Students will complete a handout where they will analyze how Shakespeare creates dramatic tension through the use of staging, timing, physicality and vocal delivery. Students will also compare/contrast reading and watching a scene from the play. For the summative assessment, students will write an essay comparing and contrasting reading an excerpt from *Much Ado About Nothing* to watching it live on stage, making a claim as to which medium was more impactful. All student handouts are included below.

**LEONATO** By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it but that she loves him with an enrag'd affection; it is past the infinite of thought.

**DON PEDRO** May be she doth but counterfeit.

**CLAUDIO** Faith, like enough.

**LEONATO** O God! Counterfeit? There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

**DON PEDRO** Why, what effects of passion shows she?

**CLAUDIO** Aside. Bait the hook well, this fish will bite.

**LEONATO** What effects, my lord? She will sit you—you heard my daughter tell you how.

**CLAUDIO** She did indeed.

**DON PEDRO** How, how, I pray you? You amaze me, I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

**LEONATO** I would have sworn it had, my lord, especially against Benedick.

**BENEDICK** I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it. Knavery cannot sure hide himself in such reverence.

**CLAUDIO** Aside. He hath ta'en th' infection. Hold it up.

**DON PEDRO** Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

**LEONATO** No, and swears she never will. That's her torment.

**CLAUDIO** 'Tis true indeed, so your daughter says. "Shall I," says she, "that have so oft encount'ed him with scorn, write to him that I love him?"

**LEONATO** This says she now when she is beginning to write to him, for she'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock till she have writ a sheet of paper. My daughter tells us all.

**CLAUDIO** Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

**LEONATO** O, when she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found "Benedick" and "Beatrice" between the sheet?

**CLAUDIO** That.

**LEONATO** O, she tore the letter into a thousand half-pence; rail'd at herself, that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knew would flout her. "I measure him," says she, "by my own spirit, for I should flout him, if he writ to me, yea, though I love him, I should."

**CLAUDIO** Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses: "O sweet Benedick! God give me patience!"

**LEONATO** She doth indeed, my daughter says so; and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her that my daughter is sometime afraid she will do a desperate outrage to herself. It is very true.

**DON PEDRO** It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

**CLAUDIO** To what end? He would make but a sport of it, and torment the poor lady worse.

**DON PEDRO** And he should, it were an alms to hang him. She's an excellent sweet lady, and (out of all suspicion) she is virtuous.

**CLAUDIO** And she is exceeding wise.

**DON PEDRO** In every thing but in loving Benedick.

**LEONATO** O my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian.

**DON PEDRO** I would she had bestow'd this dotage on me, I would have daff'd all other respects, and made her half myself. I pray you tell Benedick of it, and hear what 'a will say.

**LEONATO** Were it good, think you?

**CLAUDIO** Hero thinks surely she will die, for she says she will die if he love her not, and she will die ere she make her love known, and she will die if he woo her,

rather than she will bate one breath of her accustom'd crossness

**DON PEDRO** She doth well. If she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it, for the man (as you know all) hath a contemptible spirit.

**CLAUDIO** He is a very proper man.

**DON PEDRO** He hath indeed a good outward happiness.

**CLAUDIO** Before God, and in my mind, very wise.

**DON PEDRO** He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit.

**CLAUDIO** And I take him to be valiant.

**DON PEDRO** As Hector, I assure you, and in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise, for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear.

**LEONATO** If he do fear God, 'a must necessarily keep peace; if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

**DON PEDRO** And so will he do, for the man doth fear God, howsoever it seems not in him by some large jests he will make. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love?

**CLAUDIO** Never tell him, my lord. Let her wear it out with good counsel.

**LEONATO** Nay, that's impossible, she may wear her heart out first.

**DON PEDRO** Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter, let it cool the while. I love Benedick well, and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

**LEONATO** My lord, will you walk? Dinner is ready.

*Exeunt Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato.*



# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *Lesson Plan: Page to Stage*

Prior to the watching the performance, respond in writing to the following **socratic seminar questions**. All responses should be supported using detailed textual evidence from the scene. You should have a solid, well-supported paragraph for each question.

1. How does Shakespeare use wordplay to mock Benedick and add to the humor to the scene?
2. How do Leonato, Claudio and Don Pedro convince Benedick that Beatrice loves him?

**How do the actors and director create physical comedy in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Act II, Scene 3?**

**Staging:**

**Timing:**

**Physicality:**

**Vocal Delivery:**

# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *Lesson Plan: Page to Stage*

Comparing reading a scene from *Much Ado About Nothing* to watching a scene from *Much Ado About Nothing*.

**Similarities**

**Differences**

**Impact on the audience due to the difference between reading and watching:**

# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *Activities: Shakespeare Taboo*

From “assassination” to “zany,” Shakespeare has given us words that we encounter every day. It is almost impossible to discuss such diverse subjects as advertising, business, law, medicine, or even dinner engagements and romance without using a word first penned by the Bard.

In this activity, students will be introduced to some of these terms and gain a new appreciation for Shakespeare. Each card contains a word first penned by Shakespeare, its definition, derivation, and the play(s) in which it first appeared.

### **You will need:**

Shakespeare Taboo cards, a one minute timer

### **Instructions:**

1. Print the next three pages of this Study Guide and cut them into cards, each with one word that Shakespeare coined.
2. Divide class into two teams, sitting on opposite sides of the room.
3. Decide which team will go first. Each team has one minute.
4. One person from that team is the "giver," who takes the top card and attempts to prompt his or her teammates to guess the word at the top.
5. While the giver is prompting the teammates they may make as many guesses as they want with no penalties for wrong guesses.
6. Once the team correctly guesses the word exactly as written on the card, the giver sits down and the next person from his/her team moves on to the next word on the next card, trying to get as many words as possible in the allotted time.
7. A player may choose to “pass,” and give the next player from their team their card. When time runs out, play passes to the other team.
8. The playing team receives one point for correct guesses.
9. When you’ve gone through all of the cards, the team with the best score wins.

### **Rules:**

Unlike traditional Taboo, the "giver" may use any information on the card as well as break the word down into syllables or get his teammates to say words that rhyme with the word or a syllable in the word. For instance, if the word is “dwindle”, the student may say, “This word means to decrease or shrink. It has two syllables. The first syllable rhymes with thin. The second syllable sounds like a word for not sharp (dull).” The giver may only use speech to prompt his or her teammates; gestures, sounds (e.g. barking), or drawings are not allowed.



# Much Ado About Nothing

## Activities: Shakespeare Taboo

### AROUSE (v)

#### To stir or waken; to excite

Shakespeare added the prefix *a-*. *arouse* is formed from the verb *rouse* which in Middle English had as its original sense “to shake the feathers” describing the behavior of hawks trained for hunting.

*2 Henry VI, The Two Noble Kinsmen*

### SWAGGER (v)

#### To bluster or walk arrogantly; to act superior; to bully

Perhaps from the Norwegian word *svagga* (“to sway in walking”)

*A Midsummer Night's Dream, Troilus and Cressida, 2 Henry IV*

### CRITIC (n)

#### One who passes judgement or expresses a reasoned opinion; reviewer

From the Greek verb *krinein*, “to judge or decide.”

*Love's Labors Lost*

### ASSASSINATION (n)

#### Murder of a prominent person

The noun *assassin* appeared in English in the 13<sup>th</sup> c deriving from an Arabic word denoting a sectarian group whose members took hashish or marijuana before killing a king or public figure. From the Arabic root of *assassin*, meaning “eater of hashish.”

*Macbeth*

### MOONBEAM (n)

#### Ray of reflected light from the moon

Shakespeare was the first to coin the compound word

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

### EMPLOYER (n)

#### One who makes use of or hires.

Shakespeare added the suffix *er-* From the Latin *implicare* (“to enfold or involve”). In some Shakespeare texts, the noun is spelled *imploier*.

*Much Ado About Nothing*

### PUKE (v)

#### To vomit

Possibly from the Old English *spiwan* (“to spew or spit”) and the modern German verb with the same meaning, *spucken*.

*As You Like It*

### BUMP (n)

#### Swelling or raised spot on a surface

Both noun and verb are probably onomatopoeic, reflecting the sound of a blow. Shakespeare's *bump* is a swelling that might be caused by a blow.

*Romeo and Juliet*

### FARMHOUSE (n)

#### Farmer's home; rural dwelling

*Farm* is from the fourteenth century from the Old French term meaning “lease,” based on the Latin verb *firmare*, “to make firm.” Shakespeare coined the compound word, hyphenating it as *farm-house*.

*The Merry Wives of Windsor*

### BEDROOM (n)

#### Space for sleeping; area in or for a bed

Shakespeare uses *bed-room* to mean “room or space within a bed,” not the modern “room with a bed.”

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*

### CIRCUMSTANTIAL (adj)

#### Indirect; dependent upon circumstances or situation

Shakespeare added the suffix *ial-* to the noun *circumstance*, which refers to the incidental or “surrounding” details (such as time, place, manner or occasion) or an action

*As You Like It*

### FLAWED (adj)

#### Imperfect; showing a weakness or imperfection

Shakespeare coined the adjective, based on the Middle English *flaw*, meaning “flake or chip.”

*King Lear, Henry VIII*



# Much Ado About Nothing

## Activities: Shakespeare Taboo

### FORTUNE-TELLER (n)

**Seer or prophet; one who professes to see the future**

Shakespeare was the first to coin the compound word.

*The Comedy of Errors, The Merry Wives of Windsor*

### MIMIC (n)

**Performer skilled at imitating or aping**

From the Greek mimos for “mime or actor.”

*A Midsummer Night's Dream of Errors, The Merry Wives of Windsor*

### DWINDLE (v)

**To decrease or shrink; to become less**

Probably based on Middle English *dwine*, meaning “to waste away”.

*1 Henry IV, Macbeth*

### FRUGAL (adj)

**Sparing; thrifty or economical**

Based on the Latin *frugalis*, derived from *frux* for “fruit” or “value.”

*The Merry Wives of Windsor, Much Ado About Nothing*

### ADDICTION (n)

**Leaning or inclination; devotion to a habit**

From the Latin *addicere*, meaning “to favor.”

*Henry V, Othello*

### MANAGER (n)

**One who controls or directs; person in charge**

From the Latin *manus*, “hand.”

*Love's Labor's Lost, A Midsummer Night's Dream*

### GENEROUS (adj)

**Of noble birth; kind; freely giving or liberal**

From the Latin *genus* (“birth” or “decent”).

*Love's Labors Lost*

### LUGGAGE (n)

**Something lugged; baggage belonging to a traveler**

From the verb *lug*, from Middle English *luggen*, “to pull or drag by the hair or ear.”

*1 Henry IV, The Tempest*

### PREMEDITATED (adj)

**Contemplated or thought about beforehand; planned**

From the Latin prefix *prae-*, “before,” and the verb *meditari*

*1 Henry VI, A Midsummer Night's Dream*

### LONELY (adj)

**Having no companionship; feeling cut off or desolate**

Coined from *alone*, from the Old English combination of *al* (“all”) and *an* (“one”).

*Coriolanus, The Winter's Tale*

### EYEBALL (n)

**Rounded capsule that forms the eye; organ for vision**

*Eye* may be traced back to Old English and Germanic roots. Shakespeare was the first to use the compound word.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Tempest*

### UNAWARE (adv)

**Unknowingly; suddenly; without warning**

From the Old English *waer*, “careful or wary.”

*Venus and Adonis, 3 Henry VI*

# Much Ado About Nothing

## Activities: Shakespeare Taboo

### GLOOMY (adj)

**Dark and dismal; depressing**

Shakespeare coined the adjective from the earlier verb *gloom*, meaning “to look, feel or act sullen or despondent.”

*1 Henry V*

### WORTHLESS (adj)

**Having no value or merit; contemptible**

Shakespeare added the suffix to the Old English root *weorth* (“worthy”)

*3 Henry VI, The Two Gentlemen of Verona, Titus Andronicus, 1 Henry VI, 2 Henry VI*

### SHOOTING-STAR (n)

**Meteor appearing like a streak of light**

Shakespeare coined this compound word

*Richard II*

### HURRY (v)

**To rush or move quickly**

Of unknown origin.

*The Comedy of Errors, Venus and Adonis*

### SKIM-MILK (n)

**Milk with its cream removed**

Shakespeare coined this compound word

*1 Henry IV, A Midsummer Night's Dream*

### VULNERABLE (adj)

**Immune to harm or injury, having no weakness**

From the Latin, *vulnerare*, “to wound or injure.”

Invulnerable: *King John, Hamlet, The Tempest*  
Vulnerable: *Macbeth*

# Much Ado About Nothing

## Activities: Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is Orlando Shakespeare Theater's primary tool for unlocking Shakespeare's text, both in the classroom and for our professional company. What is the definition of paraphrasing?

**Paraphrase:** n. a rewording of the meaning of something spoken or written.

### Example:

When the Don John complains that his brother doesn't approve of him and says, "Let me be that I am and seek not to alter me."

He figuratively means, "He should like me the way I am."

### Exercise:

When Hero is revealed to be alive and says to Claudio...

**Hero:** And when I liv'd, I was your other wife,  
And when you lov'd, you were my other  
husband.

**She figuratively means...**

(write your own  
paraphrasing in the  
bubble below)

**Hero:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *Activities: Write a Review*

Explain to students that the director's job is to take the words on the script from the printed page to the stage and bring them to life. Explain that theater critics review shows and publish their opinions. For [AmericanTheatreCritics.org](http://AmericanTheatreCritics.org), critic Sherry Eaker wrote, "My point of view was that it wasn't the theatre critic's place to tell the playwright what he or she should be doing; instead, the critic should focus on what is already there and explain either why it works or why it doesn't work."

After seeing the production, have each student write a review of Orlando Shakes' production. The review should include one paragraph each for:

Introduction – What did you watch, where and when, and maybe, why?

The script – Did you like the writing, the story, the characters? Why or why not?

The acting – Did you believe and care about the characters as portrayed? Why or why not?

The design – Did you like the set, costume and light designs? Why or why not?

The staging – How did the director stage the violence? Was it effective?

The audience – What ways did the audience respond to particular moments?

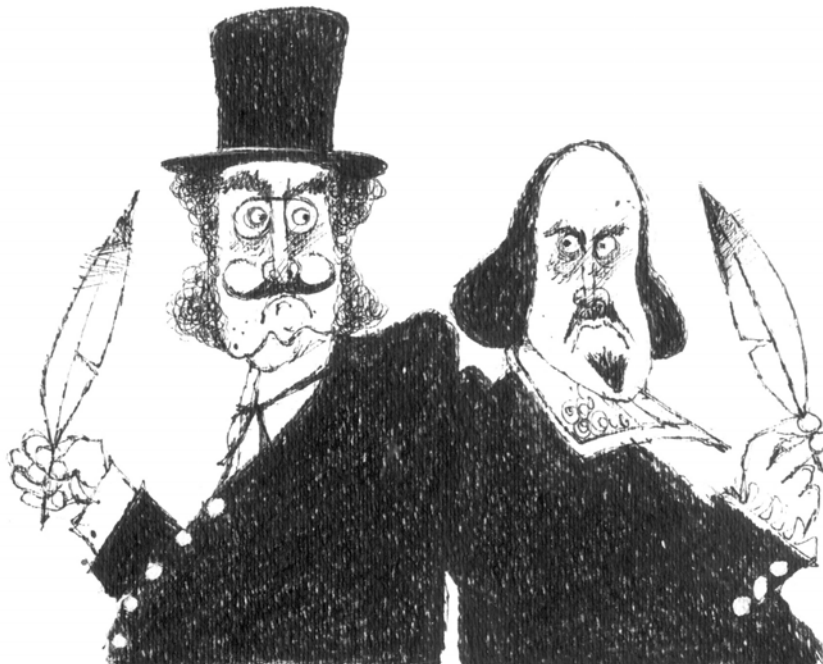
Conclusion – What will you remember about this performance?

If you wish, send your reviews to us at: [anneh@orlandoshakes.org](mailto:anneh@orlandoshakes.org)

We'd love to hear your opinions of our show!

Read more: How to Become a Theater Critic

[ehow.com/how\\_2079002\\_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc](http://ehow.com/how_2079002_become-theater-critic.html#ixzz1v9tEyMnc)





# *Much Ado About Nothing*

## *Discussion & Themes*

1. Consider the title of the play. Why do you think Shakespeare chose it? How many facts get exaggerated or misinterpreted in the play?
2. Is there something about love or being in love that makes us do or think things we normally would not do? Have there been any experiences in your own life that are similar to what happens in the play?
3. How powerful are words? Think of words that have power, such as hate, love, war, anger. What makes these words powerful? How careful should you be when using these words?



### *Honor*

**“You are a villain. I jest not. I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice.”**

**Benedick (act 5, scene 1)**

### *Love & Wit*

**“I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man swear he loves me.”**

**Beatrice (act 1, scene 1)**

### *Deception*

**“Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.”**

**Hero (act 3, scene 1)**

Information courtesy of [folger.edu](http://folger.edu), [www.william-shakespeare.info](http://www.william-shakespeare.info), [online-literature.com](http://online-literature.com), [playshakespeare.com](http://playshakespeare.com), [bard.org](http://bard.org), [enotes.com](http://enotes.com), [famousshakespearequotes.net](http://famousshakespearequotes.net), [osfashland.org](http://osfashland.org), [shmoop.com](http://shmoop.com), Coined by Shakespeare by Stanley Malles, Jeffrey McQuain, R. O. Blechman