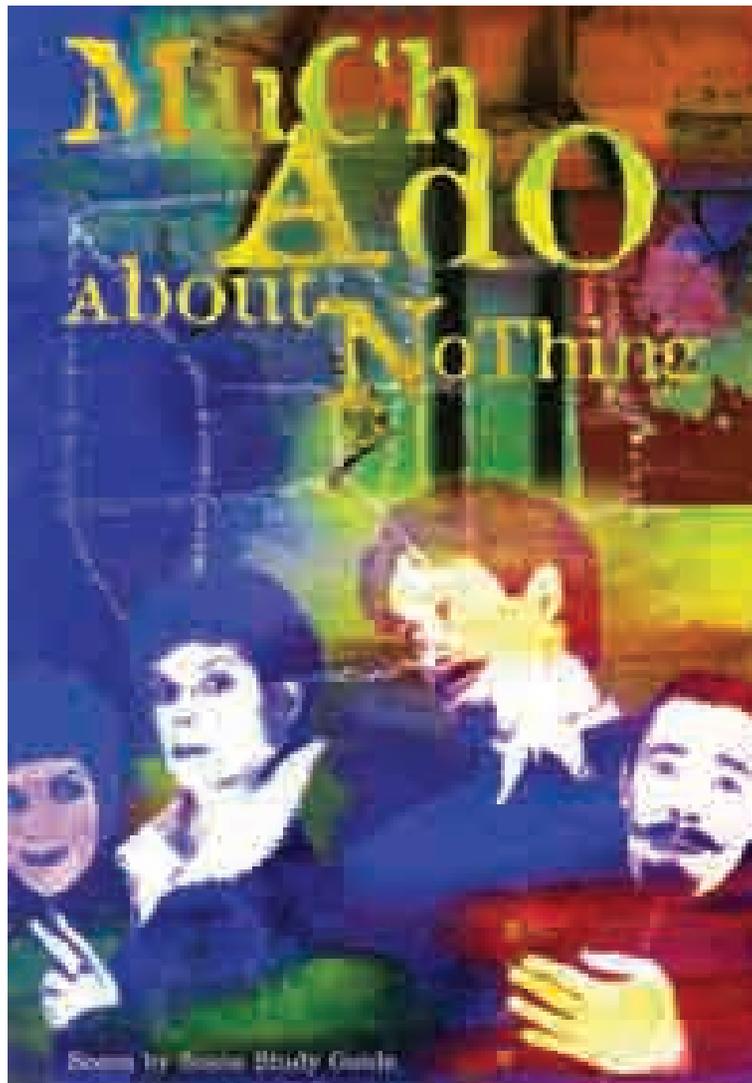


Much Ado About Nothing: an EMC Study Guide



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Teachers' notes

The emphasis in this publication is on active approaches, drawing on a range of learning styles to ensure that pupils both experience the play as a drama text and are supported in engaging with its themes and language.

Although designed for Year 9 pupils preparing for SATs, the strategies and tasks are suitable for a range of levels. If you are preparing students for the KS3 tests there are some SATs-style questions on pages 55, 79, 93 and 95.

The resource is divided into four sections:

- Before reading activities
- Ongoing activities
- Scene-by-scene activities on the play, including summaries for each act
- After reading activities

It is not envisaged that any pupil will tackle *all* the activities on *all* the scenes. Even if reading and working on the whole play, it is likely that you will be focusing with your pupils on particular scenes. Although written for a particular scene, many of the strategies (for example, annotating the text, director's notes, thought-tracking) could be adapted for the scenes you are focusing on.

Several activities use stills from the 1993 film adaptation (d. Kenneth Branagh). For those pupils who have not seen the film, there is a cast list identifying the actors playing the main parts on page 6.

Line references are to the New Penguin paperback edition, edited by R.A Foakes and text extracts are taken from this edition.

Answers to 'What happened?' (page 19)

The order of the events should be: 3, 5, 2, 7, 4, 1 and 6.

The brothers talk – a modern translation (pages 86-88)

The text extracts and translations need to be cut up and put into envelopes before the start of the lesson.

Preparing for the puppet theatre (page 103)

The activity asks pupils to write or improvise an abridged version of the play to stage in a shoebox theatre. To do this activity, each group will need: an empty shoebox; lollipop sticks or thin pieces of stiff card (6-10cm); coloured card for creating backdrops; paints or felt tips; scissors; several photocopies of the puppet templates on page 104, on card.

An image collage (page 118)

An A4 example of an image collage is included on page 5. Pupils could discuss what it reveals and use it as a model for their own collages.

Setting up the revision game (page 123)

To play the game on page 123, each group (composed of two teams of players) will need a set of question cards. To create these you need to photocopy pages 124-128, cut up the cards and fold them in half so that the symbol is on top and the question hidden underneath. You can then stick or staple them in place.

Preparation of the cards will take approximately one hour. A quicker alternative would be to use the questions on the card as an oral quiz.

Before groups begin playing the game, they each need to make up six questions on their set scenes for another group to answer and write these on the blank 'Set scene' cards.

Cast list

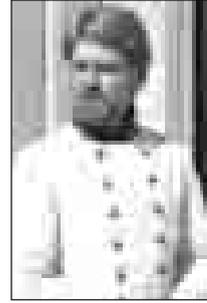
There are a number of activities throughout the publication which use stills from the Kenneth Branagh version of *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993). For pupils who have not seen the film, the characters are identified here.



Don Pedro



Claudio



Benedick



Don John



Leonato



Antonio



Hero



Beatrice



Ursula



Borachio and Conrade



Verges and Dogberry (at the rear)
and two members of the Watch

Before reading activities

A front cover image

The image below is a photograph from the Royal Shakespeare Company's 1996 production of the play. It was used as the front cover of the programme.

- In pairs, discuss the expectations this image raises about what kind of play it might be. You should think about:
 - the title
 - the two people (what they are wearing, their expressions and so on)
 - the masks they are holding.
- Feed back your ideas to the rest of the class.
- After reading the play, look again at this image and talk about whether or not it was a good choice for a programme cover.



The cast

Below is the cast list for *Much Ado About Nothing* from the New Penguin edition.

- What can you tell about the play from:
 - the names of the characters
 - their relationship to each other
 - the way the list is organised (for example, who comes first, last and so on)
 - where the play might be set.

- Compare the way this cast list is organised with the way it is presented in a different edition, if you have one.

The characters in the play

DON PEDRO, Prince of Arragon
BENEDICK, of Padua
CLAUDIO, of Florence } young lords and companions of Don Pedro
DON JOHN, Don Pedro's bastard brother
BORACHIO
CONRADE } followers of Don John
LEONATO, Governor of Messina
ANTONIO, his brother, an old man
BALTHASAR, a singer
FRIAR FRANCIS, a priest

HERO, Leonato's daughter
MARGARET
URSULA } attendants on Hero
BEATRICE, an orphan, Leonato's niece

DOGERRY, the Constable in charge of the Watch
VERGES, the Headborough, Dogberry's partner in authority
A SEXTON, and several **WATCHMEN**, under Dogberry's authority

A BOY, servant to Benedick
ATTENDANTS and **MUSICIANS** in Leonato's household
MESSENGERS

Making predictions

The play starts with the end of a war – the soldiers are returning home and will be among women again.

- From what you now know, write a 50-word scenario for what might happen in this play.

- Read your scenarios out loud to each other.

What's the story?

Here are some stills from a film version and on page 10 a few bits of dialogue from the play, spoken by different characters.

- Talk about what they tell you about the story, the themes of the play and whether you think it's likely to be comic, tragic or a mixture of the two.



BEFORE READING

Dost thou not suspect
my place? Dost thou not
suspect my years? O that he were
here to write me down an ass! But,
masters, remember that I am an ass;
though it be not written down, yet
forget not that I am an ass ...

I love you with
so much of my
heart that none is
left to protest.

There is a
kind of merry
war betwixt
Signor Benedick
and her ...

In brief, since I
do purpose to marry,
I will think nothing
to any purpose that
the world can say
against it ...

I shall see
thee, ere I die,
look pale with
love.

... I am a
plain-dealing
villain.

I will live a
bachelor.

– why, she, O, she is fallen
Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her
clean again ...

I cannot be a
man with wishing,
therefore I will die
a woman with
grieving.

Glossary

Betwixt: between

Ere: before

Suspect: this character means to use the word 'respect' here, but gets it wrong.