



Much Ado About Nothing
by William Shakespeare

Key Stage Three Workpack

The National's production

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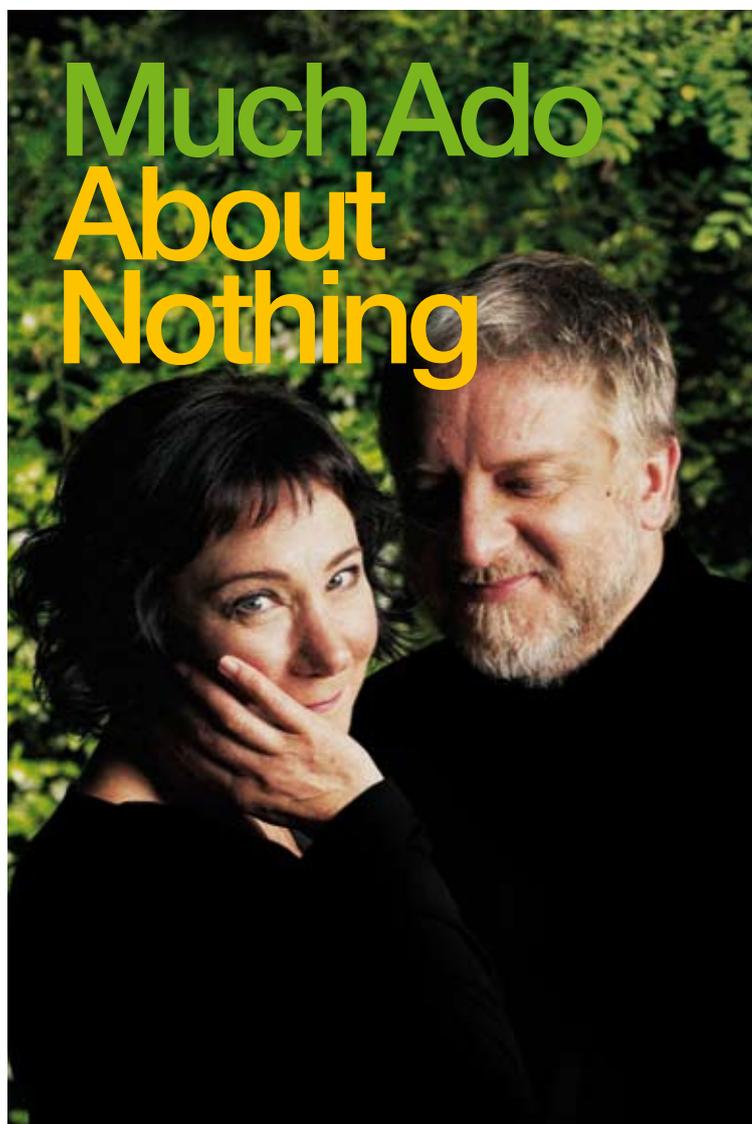
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Further production details: nationaltheatre.org.uk

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Introduction

This workpack has been designed for schools taking part in the NT Education KS3 workshop programme (although it may prove useful for anyone studying the text). It comprises a series of specially devised games and exercises intended to work alongside the workshops, providing extra drama-based activities for students taking part in the programme. These exercises develop the theatrical techniques used in the workshops, which originate mainly in the rehearsal room as tools for actors.

The workpack should be used as a 'pick and mix' style tool kit – it is not a scheme of work, and does not aim to reproduce material that is readily available online. There may be some exercises which you wish to use repeatedly, and others which you do not wish to use at all – the pack is here for you to browse through, and to dip into as you see fit. Some exercises require movement and a clear space, and others can be done quite easily in the classroom.

If you are taking part in the KS3 programme, you may wish to discuss the material with your workshop leader, and to choose exercises which either follow up a particular workshop, or prepare for the next.

The exercises are grouped under a series of headings, to enable you to focus on particular areas of work relevant to your class:

- Narrative
- Character
- Theme
- Language
- Imagery

Some exercises have a related worksheet that the student can complete. The worksheets appear as appendices at the end of the pack, and you can freely photocopy these in any size to distribute to your students.

As Zoë Wanamaker says,

“the joy of working (on a play in the theatre) is when you have time to explore it, dig into it and discover great things in it.”

The intention of this pack is to suggest some more ways of having fun with the story and with the text in order to discover the great things in it. We hope you and your class enjoy the experience of working on the play and seeing it in performance.



Rehearsal photo (Zoë Wanamaker and Simon Russell Beale) by Catherine Ashmore

Narrative

Fast forward version

[see worksheet 1]

AIMS

To clarify the narrative
To identify key themes and relationships
To create a comic synopsis

- Ask the whole class to write a summary of the play in 10 succinct sentences
- Be very strict – a sentence is not allowed to contain 10 sub clauses, but should consist of a single clear point
- Read a few out – there may be significant differences between them
- Agree on what the 10 key points of the play should be and write a definitive 10-point summary
- Now ask the class to stand in a semi-circle
- Walk behind them, slowly reading the summary
- Each time you refer to a new character, tap the nearest person on the shoulder
- That person should run in to the centre and start acting out whatever their character is doing in the story at that moment
- They can add words if they wish
- Keep the action moving and see how much of the story is told.

Variation – 7,3,1 [see worksheet 2]

AIMS

To distil the themes and ideas of the story, so that everyone is clear what the play is about
To raise and discuss differences of opinion as to what the play is about

- Ask the class to write the story in 7 sentences, then 3, then 1
- Read some out to the group, and discuss the similarities and differences.

Trailer in 5 images [see worksheet 3]

AIMS

To be clear about the narrative journey of the play
To explore different key themes which students find within the narrative
To express narrative and themes visually

- Divide the class into groups of 5 or 6. Explain that they are going to work on an advertising trailer for a production of *Much Ado About Nothing*
- First, they must agree on 5 key points in the story which they would like to show in their trailer
- Once these are agreed, the group should identify 5 keywords to accompany each point. These can be words from the text or may be thought up by the group
- Now the group should make a series of 5 freeze frames to illustrate their points, and find a way to link each freeze frame with movement
- The keywords should be spoken by the group at appropriate points throughout the sequence
- Once the group have rehearsed their sequences, ask them to add any other sound effects or movement if necessary
- Finally, ask the group to find a point in the sequence to add the title and author of the play
- Have a dress rehearsal, and show each sequence to the rest of the class.



Rehearsal photograph of members of the company by Catherine Ashmore

Narrative

Detective games

[see worksheet 4]

AIMS

To develop the world of the play
To explore characters from new angles
To encourage directorial decision making

There are several moments in the play where the characters refer to something that they have done, or plan to do, but the audience can only guess what has happened. There are no concrete answers to these questions, but an actor playing any one of these parts will want to make their own decisions, in order to help them create their characters.

- Ask your class to answer these questions – any credible theories are acceptable
- Discuss them together – how many different answers are there?
- What new questions do they raise?

Questions the play raises and doesn't answer include:

- What happened between Beatrice and Benedick – did he break her heart? (*he lent it me a while, and I gave him use for it 2,1,211ff*)
- How does Borachio find a way to ensure that Hero is out of the way so that he can set up the trick with Margaret? (*I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent, 2, 2, 34-5*)
- The circumstances surrounding the conflict between Don John and Don Pedro (*you have of late stood out against your brother...*)
- What happened to Beatrice's parents? (*my mother cried...*)
- Where is Antonio's son? (*how now brother, where is your son..?*)
- Why doesn't Beatrice know that Hero didn't sleep in her room the night before the wedding? (*Until last night I have this twelve month been her bedfellow...*)
- And what about Margaret apparently not having any idea that her actions have led to Hero's accusation in the church? (*she hath always been just and virtuous...*) nb. in the film she gets it, but this isn't in the play!

There may be others...

Freezeframe Borachio's narrative – a physical storyboard

[see worksheet 5]

After all the confusion with the Watch, Borachio tells Don Pedro very succinctly what exactly has happened (although he does put a bit of spin on his account, suggesting that it was all Don John's idea).

He says:

Do you hear me and let this Count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes. What your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who in the night overheard me confessing to this man how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments, how you disgraced her when you should marry her. My villainy they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

- Divide the class into small groups of about five
- Read them Borachio's account a couple of times
- Ask each group to discuss what they have heard and pick out the sequence of events Borachio narrates
- They should turn this into a series of frozen images
- Now ask each group to present their images to the rest of the class, to see the entire story of Hero's "death".

Variation – 2-D Storyboarding

- You could also ask the class to storyboard this sequence as a series of images on paper

Narrative

News coverage of wedding/trial

[see worksheet 6]

AIMS

To establish precisely the facts of the narrative
To understand about points of view in creating and staging a scene
To play with the relationship between the scene and its audience

- Ask the class to work as journalists or reporters covering the wedding of Hero and Claudio – or the trial of Don John and Borachio
- They can write their articles either as broadsheet or tabloid journalists, making the events as factual or sensational as they wish.

Variation

- Ask students to write with a specific bias, for instance as a feminist reporter, a traditionalist, a supporter of Don John's party, etc.

Mini-scenes

AIMS

To consolidate the work into a performance piece
To speak the lines and perform a section of the story
To piece the narrative together visually
To help develop drama literacy into reading and understanding a simple play script

- Divide the class into groups, and give each group one mini-scene to work on (see overleaf)
 - Ask the groups to sit down and read their scene, working out which part of the story they have, and what is going on
 - After establishing what happens and who is in their scene, they should cast the actors
 - In some cases there are actors present in a scene who do not have any lines
 - Once the group have cast their scene, they should put their script in a safe place and make a frozen picture of the action of their part of the story
 - When the groups are ready, show each frozen picture in order, asking the rest of the class to guess who is who and what is going on
 - If any character is unclear, ask the class to help with suggestions of how to be clearer
 - As you go round, tap individuals on the shoulder and ask them who they are and what they want in the scene. This will help to ensure that everyone understands their role and why they are in the scene
 - When all the groups have shown their pictures, ask them to make a silent movie of the events of their scene
 - This should begin and end with a freeze, so that the audience knows when they are starting and finishing
 - Show the silent movies, and encourage the audience to discuss what works best in telling a story without words
 - Now ask the groups to return to their scripts.
 - They have created a scene with action, which has helped to inform their characters – the final step is to add the words
 - Depending on the amount of text in your scenes, you could also ask the groups to improvise any extra words they think their characters should say
- The next pages contain suggested miniscenes – you may prefer to lengthen or shorten them to suit your class.

Narrative (mini-scenes 1 – 2)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Mini-scene 1

(enter everyone, the guests welcomed by Leonato. Exit all but Benedick, Claudio and Don Pedro)

Benedick Claudio is in love. With Hero, Leonato's short daughter. (Exit)
Don Pedro I will assume thy part in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.

(Later – at the masque. Benedick and Beatrice are dancing, masked)

Beatrice Benedick is the prince's jester – a very dull fool.
Benedick I cannot abide my Lady Tongue. (Exit both)
Don John Are you not Signor Benedick?
Claudio I am he.
Don John He is enamoured on Hero, I pray you dissuade him from her,
she is no equal for his birth. (Exit)
Claudio Friendship is constant in all other things
Save in the offices and affairs of love
(Enter Don Pedro and Hero)
Don Pedro Claudio, fair Hero is won.
Claudio Silence is the perfectest herald of joy.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Mini-scene 2

Benedick Hah! the Prince and Monsieur Love. I will hide.
Don Pedro Come hither Leonato. What was it you told me of today,
that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signor Benedick?
Benedick Is't possible?
Don Pedro She's an excellent sweet lady, and she is virtuous.
Claudio And exceeding wise
Don Pedro In everything but loving Benedick
Claudio Hero thinks she will surely die.
Leonato My lord, will you walk? Dinner is surely ready.
(exeunt all but Benedick)
Benedick This can be no trick. Love me? Why, it must be requited. When I said I
would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live til I were married.

Narrative (mini-scenes 3 – 4)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Mini-scene 3

(Beatrice comes running to listen to Hero and Ursula talking)

Ursula But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

Hero So says the prince, and my new trothed lord.
But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick
Never to let Beatrice know of it.

Ursula It were not good
She knew his love, lest she'll make sport at it.

Hero I will go to Benedick
And counsel him to fight against his passion,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly.

Ursula She cannot be so much without true judgement
As to refuse so rare a gentleman.
Signor Benedick
For shape, for bearing, argument and valour
Goes foremost in report through Italy. (Exeunt Ursula and Hero)

Beatrice What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Benedick, love on, I will requite thee
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Mini-scene 4

Don John It is so, the Count Claudio will marry the daughter of Leonato.
Borachio Yea, my lord, but I can cross it. I can, at any unseasonable instant
of the night, appoint Margaret to look out at her lady's chamber
window. This will be proof enough to misuse the Prince, to vex
Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato.

Don John Only to despite them, I will endeavour anything.
(Exit Borachio. Enter Don Pedro and Claudio)

Don John Means your worship to be married?

Don Pedro You know he does. Why, what's the matter?

Don John The Lady is disloyal.

Claudio Who, Hero?

Don John Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero

Claudio If I see anything tonight why I should not marry her tomorrow,
in the congregation, there will I shame her.

Don Pedro I will join with thee to disgrace her.

Narrative (mini-scenes 5 – 7)

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Mini-scene 5

Dogberry Are you good men and true? I pray you watch about Signor Leonato's door, for the wedding being there tomorrow there is a great coil tonight.

Watch Well, masters, we hear our charge, let us go sit here upon the church bench til two and then all to bed.
(Enter Borachio and Conrade. As they talk, the Watch hide and listen)

Borachio I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats

Watch Some treason, masters, yet stand close

Borachio Tonight I have wooed Margaret by the name of Hero. Claudio and the prince, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John saw this amiable encounter.

Conrade And thought they Margaret was Hero?

Borachio Two of them did.

Watch We charge you in the prince's name stand! We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that was ever known in the commonwealth.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Mini-scene 6

Friar You come hither, sir, to be married to this lady?

Claudio No. Fare thee well Hero, most foul, most fair, farewell.
(Hero faints. Exit Don John, Don Pedro, Claudio)

Friar Lady what man is he you are accused of?

Hero They know that do accuse me. I know none.

Friar Your daughter here the princes left for dead.
This shall change slander to remorse.
Come lady, die to live. (Exit Friar, Hero and Leonato)

Benedick Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?

Beatrice On my soul, my cousin is belied.

Benedick Come, bid me do anything for thee.

Beatrice Kill Claudio! Oh God that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market place.

Benedick Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?

Beatrice Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

Benedick Enough. I am engaged.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING Mini-scene 7

Benedick You are a villain, I jest not. You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you.
(Enter the Watch with Borachio)

Borachio I have deceived even your very eyes. What your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light.

Leonato I cannot bid you bid my daughter live.
But since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew.
(Enter Beatrice and Hero, veiled. Leonato gives Hero to Claudio)

Claudio Another Hero?

Leonato She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.

Benedick Soft and fair, where is Beatrice?

Claudio I'll be sworn he loves her.
Here's a paper written in his hand to Beatrice.

Hero And here's another writ in my cousin's hand
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

Benedick A miracle. Here's our own hands against our hearts.

Don Pedro How dost thou, Benedick, the married man?

Character: status

Status

AIMS

To create a useful vocabulary for exploring character relationships
To offer a framework for detailed character analysis
To create a tool for directorial reference

- Discuss status with your class, and how it might be used in storytelling and drama.
- Explain that in the theatre we use levels of status as a means of differentiating between characters on the stage. We use numbers to demonstrate the different levels of status – Status 10 is the highest, and Status 1 the lowest. Status 7 is about the level of interaction between peers.
- Demonstrate each level from 1-10, so that the students can see the physical differences between high and low status – status 1 people don't make eye contact very well, and try to take up as little space as possible. Status 10 people take up lots of space and are not afraid to look others in the eye, or even look down on them. Pretend to be a new teacher and use a door and a chair to make the distinctions really clearly as follows:
 - **Status 1**, can only just about bring him/herself to look through the door
 - **Status 2**, can come in and say hello before retreating back out of the door
 - **Status 3**, can step inside the room and say hello
 - **Status 4**, can stand behind the chair and say hello, but doesn't quite dare to touch it
 - **Status 5**, knows that they should be able to sit down. S/he would probably grab the chair and use it as a prop to feel more secure when saying hello
 - **Status 6**, can sit nervously on the edge of chair to greet the class
 - **Status 7**, sits comfortably on the chair and says hello in a friendly way
 - **Status 8**, says hello rather forcefully, making sure they have full attention
 - **Status 9**, probably remains standing so that s/he can tower over the class
 - **Status 10**, is too grand for such a small chair.

Status games

AIMS

To experiment with ideas and status

- Choose 4 or 5 volunteers and secretly give each of them a different status number. They must come into the room and say hello to each other and everyone else. The rest of the class must guess the status of each volunteer
- Stick a label with a status number on the foreheads of everyone in the class, so they cannot see their own number. Now ask everyone to imagine they are at a party, trying to speak only to people of high status. See how the dynamics of the party unfold, and whether people can begin to guess their own status.

Status walks

AIMS

To explore changes in mood
To experience a sense of status in a group

- Ask the group to walk around the room greeting each other
- Now ask them to walk with different status intentions – for instance, very powerfully, or very anxiously
- Discuss how these different ways of walking affect the mood in the room.

Character: status

Status line-up

AIMS

To consider characters and relationships through status
To explore changes in status relationships at different points in the story

- Give each student a character from the play, and ask them to make a line in order of their status at the beginning of the play
- Allow for discussion and debate, as different characters argue their status
- Now make a status line for immediately after the wedding scene
- Make a line for the moment after Borachio's confession
- Make another line for the end of the play
- How have the characters shifted in relation to each other, if at all?

Status seesaw

AIMS

To explore the dynamics of status relationships between characters

- Divide the class into pairs. Each pair should choose a pair of characters whose status relationship changes at different moments in the narrative
- Now ask the pairs to create two frozen pictures of the contrasting status relationships between their chosen characters. For instance, at the beginning of the play, Claudio shows Hero great respect, but in the wedding scene, he insults her, so their relative status has changed drastically. The frozen pictures could show Claudio kneeling to propose to Hero, and then Hero falling to the ground as he insults her
- When the pairs have created their pictures, they should add a line, either from the text, or improvised, that each character might say within their frozen pictures. For instance, in the Claudio/Hero example, in the first photograph, Claudio might say "can the world buy such a jewel", and in the second "rotten orange"
- Ask the rest of the class to watch each scene and to discuss their observations.

Character work

More detective games

[see worksheet 7]

AIMS

To continue answering the questions raised by the play
To encourage making choices about the play
To consider the decision-making processes which take place in the rehearsal room

Ask your students to work in the role of director to answer the following questions raised by actors performing the play:

- The actor playing Benedick asks: When Benedick says “this can be no trick” is he already completely convinced, or is he still trying to decide?
- The actress playing Beatrice asks: In the beginning, when I say I once lent my heart to Benedick, do I mean that I was once in love with him, and it still hurts?
- The actress playing Hero asks: My father tells me that if Don Pedro asks me to marry him I should say yes, but then I get Claudio. Which one of them do I actually want, and why?
- The actor playing Claudio asks: When I tell Don Pedro I’m willing to leave Hero and go back to Aragon with him straight after my wedding, am I eager or reluctant?
- The actor playing Benedick asks: Would I really have killed Claudio for Beatrice?
- The actress playing Beatrice asks: How do I play my speech at the end of the overhearing scene? Is it really romantic, or quite practical?
- The actor playing Claudio asks: How do I play the speech where I think Don Pedro has stolen Hero? Am I resigned, flippant, angry or tragic?
- The actress playing Hero asks: I hardly ever say anything, but lots of people talk about me and to me. How expressive should I be even though I don’t have any lines? Give me some specific examples of things to do in some of my scenes.

The courtroom

[see worksheet 8]

AIMS

To establish character narratives at the end of the play
To do some detailed character work in a dramatic context
To explore the theme of responsibility in the play
To make directorial choices about characters and their actions throughout the play
To make directorial choices in a staging exercise

It is the end of the play. Beatrice and Hero are married. But there is still the trial of Don John and Borachio to be arranged. Together, the class should decide how it should be managed. Here are some of the questions that need to be asked:

- Who is the judge?
- Who should be called as witnesses?
- Should anyone else be put in the dock?
- Who are the jury (if there is one)?
- Who is going to ask the questions?

Once the class have agreed on who should be there, and in what role, they should decide how to stage the scene. Here are some questions that will help them make decisions:

- Where should the judge sit/stand?
- Where should the accused stand?
- How should witnesses be called, and who should do the job of bringing them in and out?
- If there is a jury, where do they sit?

Make notes of all the answers, and use them to stage a whole class reconstruction of the trial scene. Ensure that everyone who had any responsibility in the shaming of Hero is called to account and has to explain themselves.

Character work

Streams of consciousness

[see worksheet 9]

AIMS

To explore characters in detail
To consider the relationship between language and emotion, and between language and action

- Use any of the following lines from the play as opening sentences for the relevant characters' diary entries
- Ask the class to write in character for at least two minutes without taking their pen off the paper
- If they run out of ideas, they can doodle, or repeat a word – whatever they like, as long as they remain in character!

Claudio

*I liked her ere I went to wars...
Friendship is constant in all other
things save in the offices and affairs
of love...*

Hero

*Daughter, remember what I told you.
If the prince do solicit you in that kind,
you know your answer...
Fair Hero is won...*

Beatrice

*Can this be true?...
Oh that I were a man*

Benedick

*This can be no trick...
Kill Claudio...*

Character work

The masque

AIMS

To explore the theme of appearance and reality in the play
To consider how characters mask and reveal themselves in the story
To familiarise students with the language of the play which supports this theme
To explore aspects of staging and costuming while using masks

There are two key moments where characters appear in masks, and these set the tone for a theme of appearance and reality which runs throughout the play. This exercise offers students an opportunity to use masks in rehearsal for a scene and to play with different aspects of characters.

Much Ado About Nothing is full of formal patterns and oppositional structures. Ask the students to make a list of as many different pairings or oppositions as they can think of within the play, for instance, two sets of lovers; two sets of brothers; old and young brothers; two cousins, two weddings, etc. Many characters will appear in more than one pairing. In the masque, characters pair off in a formal dance, but within that formality, they have the freedom to speak quite openly, or even rudely, so there are two oppositions in one context!

- Review this list as a class
- Now ask students to write down different oppositions that they might see within individual characters – for instance public/private personae; in/not in love; telling the truth/telling lies. Review their discoveries
- Give each student a plain mask, and explain that they will represent the characters we see in the Masque scene
- Ask them to decide which character they would like to wear it, remembering the opposing pictures we see of those characters
- They should then divide the mask in half lengthways, and use each half to present the opposing aspects of their chosen character

- They can decorate the mask in any way they wish, but they should include as many words or lines from anywhere in the the play as possible which tell them about their character. We have included some examples, but they should also choose their own if possible

- Once the masks are decorated, ask the class to find partners whose masks correspond with relationships in the play (so a Beatrice, for instance, will find a Benedick). Now ask these pairs to choose a short section of dialogue from the masque, and practise it together

- Show some of the sections to the rest of the group

- Ask the group what it was like performing the scenes wearing the masks. Did the words on the masks make any difference?

Hands and feet

[see worksheet 10]

AIMS

To continue the theme of oppositions and patterns within the play
To explore means of linking text with visual and physical stimuli

- Ask each student to take a large sheet of paper, and to draw round their hand and their foot (or use the template on worksheet 10)
- Explain that these shapes represent either Beatrice/Hero/Benedick/Claudio. When they choose to marry, they will be leaving behind their single lifestyles and embarking on something new
- Each student should choose ONE of these four characters to work on
- The hand that the students have drawn represents everything that their chosen character has left behind. The foot represents everything they will step into in their new married life
- The students should use as many drawing materials as possible to fill in the outlines with quotes, images, colours and words to express all the different aspects of their lives that the characters are leaving/taking with them.

Character work

Snapshot montages

[see worksheet 11]

AIMS

To explore descriptive language to create character
To develop the relationship between text and physical representation

- Ask the students to work in groups of 4 or 5 to explore a character from *Much Ado About Nothing*. They should begin by making a list of words to describe the character – this should include language from the play, as well as their own words
- They should make as long a list as possible, and then narrow it down to about 8 words or phrases
- Once they have agreed their list, the students should find a way to put the items together visually as a series of frozen images, which they can then link with movement
- As well as saying their words, they could add any other linking sounds which enhance the visual picture they are creating
- Encourage the groups to think creatively about the way they speak – in chorus, or in echoes, for example
- Show each group's work to the rest of the class. Discuss the way each sequence represents its chosen character.

Mapping character journeys

[see worksheet 12]

AIMS

To chart the journey of two key characters through the play
To explore the idea that these characters undergo changes of mood and intention
To relate their narrative journey in the text with the experience of movement on a "stage"

- Both Beatrice and Benedick undergo a complex emotional journey from professed singlehood to marriage

- Ask your class to create a map on paper (using the template on worksheet 12) of these two characters' emotional journeys through the play. What happens if one is overlaid onto the other? Where and how might they intersect?

- As well as drawing the characters' routes, ask your students to illustrate the map with quotations from the play which suggest statements of intent or changes of direction. They might also wish to illustrate the map with drawings or photographs of particular locations, such as the garden or the church.

Variation – journeys in the space

- Ask half the class to stand in a square shape around the edge of the space. They are in role as Beatrice. The other half are Benedick

- Everyone should set off individually on a journey across the floor which can take them in any direction, but they must end up on the other side, and they must remember the route they took

- Now ask them to make the journey again, keeping to exactly the same route, but including some appropriate text from their maps at the beginning and the end of their journey

- Now they should repeat the journey, keeping the same route and the spoken words, but also including two of the changes of direction they worked out on their maps. They should mark this change with a physical action or movement and a word or phrase

- They should repeat the journey one more time, this time adding any other words and actions they think are needed to further indicate their emotional journey

- Show a few Beatrices at a time, and then a few Benedicks and discuss any observations made by the rest of the class

- Try asking a Beatrice and a Benedick to walk at the same time. What happens?

Character work

Dating agency descriptions

[see worksheet 13]

AIMS

To have fun creating detailed character analyses
To explore the concept of self-knowledge

- Ask the group to work in character
- They should write a description of their chosen character for a dating agency
- Remind the group that this is how the character sees themselves, not how you might see them from the outside
- Read aloud some of the descriptions and guess which character they describe.

Variation – who is being honest about themselves?

Now ask everyone to imagine they answered the description and went on a date with that character.

- How did they match up to their description of themselves?
- How did they fall short?
- Were they very different?

Post-it notes/10 things I like about you

AIMS

To explore a range of character choices
To develop personal opinions in relation to characters

- Ask everyone to walk around the room in role as their chosen character, and armed with a handful of post-it notes
- At a signal, everyone should find a partner and introduce themselves in character
- Then, each person should write down one thing they like about the character they've just met, and stick it on them
- As soon as they have stuck on their post-it notes, everyone should move off again, and find someone else to greet
- When everyone is covered in post-it notes, ask them to come together in groups of the same characters, and pool the discoveries on their post-its
- Share these around the class.

Variation

- Change the instruction to one thing that frustrates/infuriates/amuses them about the character they've met.

Imagery

Truffling

AIMS

To build a collective imaginary world for the play
To encourage individuals to think imaginatively about the play
To build on the visual vocabulary of the play
To visualise the world of the play in depth

- Ask the group to walk around the room, visualising for themselves what is happening in the world of the play – not just scenes from the play and named characters, but who else might be there, what they might be doing, how would they be behaving, as well as the physical world
- When someone gets an image they call the group quickly into a huddle by clapping their hands, and describe in detail what they see
- They should begin each description with the words “I see a...” (for example, “I see a young woman sewing a beautiful dress and singing to herself”)
- Encourage the group to create the images as swiftly as possible – create a sense of urgency rather than allowing too much time to ponder or let the images become laboured.

Extension of the exercise – montage world

AIMS

To animate the imaginary world of the play
To continue to develop a visual vocabulary to support the narrative
To inspire new responses to the play

- Bring the group into a circle
- Explain that you will now be working with the images the group have just ‘seen’ and any new ones that occur to people
- Walk around the circle, tapping every second or third person on the shoulder as a cue to enter the space one at a time
- One person at a time enters the circle describing an image and simultaneously accompanying their words with a gesture enacted and then held in a freeze
- Their description narrates what they are about to show; “There’s an old man huddled by the fire” etc
- The images don’t have to connect: this is not a tableaux of one moment but a montage of the story world (like the sequences of images that might accompany the credits at the start of a film)
- Once you have 10-12 people in the picture, tell them you will give them a signal to animate the picture, to continue repeating their gesture and to make a sound or say a phrase or a thought that their character might be saying or feeling at that moment
- Animate them, bring them in one by one with a tap on the shoulder, build them with an agreed signal, and fade them out by tapping people on the shoulder one by one.

Imagery/language

Acting the image

AIMS

To explore language in detail
To connect language and visual imagery
To experiment with text in performance

- Choose a verse speech which is rich in imagery (for example, Leonato's or Friar Francis' speeches in Act 4, scene 1) and read it around the class
- Explain any vocabulary which is not clear
- Now divide the class into groups of three or four, and give each group one or two lines of the speech to work on
- It doesn't matter if the speech doesn't yet make sense to them out of context
- Ask each group to find an action for every important word in their lines, and perform the actions together as a chorus
- They should then find a way to say their lines as a chorus
- Ask the groups to create interesting movement, shapes and levels, and to pay particular attention to making sure that the sounds and actions fit together
- Once the groups have rehearsed, bring them into a circle in the correct order, and perform the lines around the circle to create a visual impression of the whole speech.

Suggested acting the image text

- 1) *Why doth not every earthly thing
Cry shame upon her?*
- 2) *Could she here deny
The story that is printed in her blood?*
- 3) *Do not live Hero, do not ope thine
eyes
For did I think thou wouldst not
quickly die*
- 4) *Thought I thy spirits were stronger
than thy shames
Myself would on the rearward of
reproaches
Strike at thy life*
- 5) *Grieved I, I had but one?
Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame*
- 6) *Why ever wast thou lovely in mine
eyes?*
- 7) *Why had I not with charitable hand
Took up a beggar's issue at my
gates?*
- 8) *Who smirched thus and mired with
infamy*
- 9) *I might have said, no part of it is mine
This shame derives itself from
unknown loins*
- 10) *But mine, and mine I loved and mine I
praised
And mine that I was proud of, mine so
much*
- 11) *That I myself was to myself not mine
Valuing of her*
- 12) *Why she, oh she is fallen
Into a pit of ink*
- 13) *That the wide sea
Hath drops too few to wash her clean
again*
- 14) *And salt too little, which may season
give
To her foul tainted flesh*

Themes

Handshake key words

AIMS

To explore key themes
To develop a visual vocabulary
To encourage an open attitude to interpretation

PART 1

- In groups of 3-5, students should discuss the key themes of *Much Ado About Nothing*. They should bring back a list of key words which can be used for the following exercise.

PART 2

- Ask students to stand in a circle, and invite any two people to enter the circle, shake hands and freeze
- Now gently extricate one of the pair. They go back to the circle, leaving the other person still frozen as if shaking hands
- Ask the group to look at the picture of this person. Anyone can enter the circle and complete the image they now see – doing anything but shaking hands
- When the new image is in place and frozen, take the first student out, leaving the second person frozen in a new shape, which any other person can complete to form another new image
- Continue making new shapes in pairs as long as images are coming quickly around the circle. Encourage the students to move fast and not think too much – they should run in and make each image in a couple of seconds
- When an appropriate image occurs, ask the students to create their images thematically. Use the key words you have identified in Part 1 of this exercise
- See how many images the group can create around each key word or theme.

Variation

[see worksheet 14]

- Use a selected speech from the play – or use the story narrative divided into sections. Divide it into sections which can be given to the groups to distil into “telegrams” (or text messages), using only the most important words
- Now ask the students to agree which single word is the most important in their section of the speech
- When they are agreed, ask each group to create an image of their key word
- Show the images around the circle, asking the rest of the group to guess each word.

Themes

Fashion design

[see worksheet 15]

Borachio rails drunkenly against the excesses of Elizabethan fashion, and the way it deforms shape and robs people of their sense.

- Ask the students if there are points in the play where this view seems particularly appropriate
- Look for other references to clothing and fashion throughout the play
- Look at some images of Elizabethan costume, and note the unusual shapes, padding, construction etc
- Ask the class to do some research on contemporary fashion, to see if they find any designs which might particularly enrage Borachio
- Discuss ways in which both the Elizabethan and modern designs conceal or enhance the wearer's form, and what that might communicate about them
- Ask the students to design character costumes for *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which the clothes demonstrate the characters' personalities as fully as possible. The students can be as extreme as they wish, in order to illustrate the work of the "Deformed Thief", fashion.

Themes/design

Mood in a scene

AIMS

To explore the layers of interpretation which contribute to making a scene
To play with mood and atmosphere in a scene
To experiment with language using other media
To experiment with interpretation

- Find magazine photographs which could represent settings for the play – they should be suitably open to a variety of ideas
- Cut out words and characters' names from the play to suggest moods and feelings
- Use acetates to draw over the photograph with colours and shapes to suggest moods on top of the scene
- The class can add words from the text between the photo and the acetate layer, or write on words of their own to create a mood for their chosen scene
- Encourage the class to mark and draw over the photographs using the acetates in order to affect the original image and create a new impression of the scene

Suggested words

sick	displeasure	marry	affection	cross
poison	rotten	lady	chamber	contaminated
proof	misuse	despite	disloyal	honour
arbour	evening	grace	music	wooing
counterfeit	passion	falls	desperate	die
modestly	unworthy	trick	witness	love
pleached	bower	man	sun	ripened
cupid	golden	silver	treacherous	love
disdain	scorn	love	woodbine	noble
fair faced	swear	fight	refuse	fire
maiden	contempt	holy	condemned	confirm
enrage	mistress	chamber	vilely	planted
placed	possessed	enraged	slander	lechery
friar	rich	precious	rotten	orange
sign	semblance	maid	blushes	truth
witness	virtue	exterior	modesty	soul
luxurious	chaste	venus	savage	stale
sensuality	common	child	father	blot
grieved	villain	vile	foul	fair
beauty	dagger	shame	death	mercy
epitaph	mournful	slander	remorse	infamy
grief	die	friendship	kill	friend
rotten	orange	dagger	sword	death
slandered	villainy	old	proof	sweet
griefs	reverence	gentlewoman	planted	honeysuckles

Theme/language

Three freeze frames – a view of marriage

[see worksheet 16]

AIMS

To visualise some of Beatrice's comic imagery

To visualise the theme of marriage at an early point in the play

To understand Beatrice's view of marriage in Act 1

For hear me, Hero, wooing, wedding and repenting is as a Scotch jig, a measure and a cinquepace: the first suit is hot and hasty like a Scotch jig (and full as fantastical), the wedding mannerly modest (as a measure) full of state and sincerity, and then comes Repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinquepace faster and faster, til he sink into his grave.

- Divide the class into groups of about 5 or 6
- Ask each group to create three images of the three stages of wooing, wedding and repenting described by Beatrice in terms of dance
- The groups can then animate the freeze-frames and run them together, adding any sound effects.

Variation

- Discussion – where else does dance occur in the play?
- How does it affect the mood in these scenes?
- Where does it represent freedom/formality/roleplay/celebration?

Language

Fridge magnet poetry

[see worksheet 17]

AIMS

To use the language of the play to make creative images

To inspire fearlessness when handling the language of the play

To consider the creative effect of combinations of words (a key stylistic method of Shakespeare's)

- Cut out several copies of as many single words from the play as possible around a particular theme, eg. love/deception. Place them so the students can easily help themselves to as many words as they find appealing in relation to the theme
- It may be easiest to do this exercise in small groups around tables or in small circles on the floor
- Ask all the students to use the words in any orders and combinations to create poems on the subject of your chosen theme
- They can stick their words onto sheets of paper to create interesting images as well as combinations of words

Put the poems together either as a train around the floor or the walls for the class to read.

Variation – fridge magnet insults

[see worksheet 18]

- Cut up a variety of words (see right), describing people in the story – not necessarily insults
- Ask the class to choose a few words and put them together to create their own Shakespearean insults
- In order to make sense of their words, they can add “Thou” and any fruit or vegetable

examples:

Thou stuffed dissembler

Thou halting carrot-companion

Signor Mountanto	Monging
Stuffed	Boy
Man	Common
Lady	Stale
Disdain	Villain
Parrot	Varlet
Teacher	Dissembler
Young	Dotard
Start-up	Fool
Prince	Milksop
Jester	Lord
Dull	Lack
Fool	Beard
Count	Don
Comfect	Worm
Harpy	Forward
My	March-chick
Lady	Lamb
Tongue	Lion
Monsieur	Uncle
Love	Horse
Truant	Devil
Vile	Companion
Thief	Block
Rotten	Halting
Orange	Caught
Fashion	Scratching

Language

Variation – bad love poetry

[see worksheet 19]

AIMS

To inspire creative responses to the theme of love in the play
To consider the role of a young Elizabethan courtier in society
To experiment creatively with the language of the play
To explore the themes of love and comedy together

A young Elizabethan man was expected to be a “soldier, scholar and courtier” – to turn their hand to fighting and duelling, be charming at court, and be very skilled in languages and the arts. In true Elizabethan style, Benedick attempts to write a love poem to Beatrice, but he discovers that this is one skill he does not have.

- Ask the class to use some of the language of his speech (5, 2, 17ff) – or anywhere else in the play if you prefer – to write a bad Elizabethan love poem to Beatrice.

Epitaphs

[see worksheet 20]

Claudio has to write an epitaph to Hero – which is also not very good.

- Ask the group to write a suitable epitaph, which tells Hero’s story in verse
- They could also write epitaphs for the other characters at the ends of their lives!



A portrait by Nicholas Hilliard, possibly of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex © The Gallery Collection/Corbis

Language

List writing poetry

AIMS

To invent creative responses to the play
To recognise one of Shakespeare's poetic techniques

- Divide the class into groups of about 5
- Give each group a character to work with at a particular moment in the story, for instance, Claudio describing Beatrice in love with Benedick
- Ask them to discuss the effect and impact of building a descriptive list in this way
- Now ask them to choose any other heightened moment in the story and to create a descriptive list to express the mood or feeling of that moment
- When the lists are complete, ask the groups to find a way to present the lists as a series of linked images to create a piece of choreographed movement
- Ask the groups to pay particular attention to the pace and mood of their lists as they speak them
- Discuss the effects the performances have on your understanding of the moment or character which is being illustrated.

Some of the lists in the play:

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

*Wooing, wedding and repenting is like a Scotch
jig... (2, 1, 52ff)*

One woman is fair, yet I am well... (2, 3, 21ff)

If fair faced, she would swear... (3, 1, 61ff)

*Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero...
(3,2,78)*

A nightgown in respect of yours... (3, 4, 14ff)

Much Ado About Nothing

Workpack part 2

The exercises on the following pages are an extension of the workpack designed for students who have already seen the National Theatre production of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

In some instances, it is suggested that students should complete the relevant exercises from the first part of the workpack in order to benefit fully from the material described here.

Character/design: post-show exercises

Post-it notes 2

[see worksheet 21]

AIMS

To develop critical responses to the production
To consider the choices made in the production

- Cast the main characters from the play, and give them a label
- Give the students who have not been cast a handful of post-it notes
- Ask everyone, including the students who have been cast as characters, to walk around the room
- As students meet a character, they should write on their post-it note what they liked and/or were surprised by about that character as portrayed **in the production**
- When each character is covered in post-it notes, line them up in front of the other students and ask them to read out the range of critical opinions the group has written about their character
- Use these as a basis for discussion and review of the production



Photo (*Much Ado About Nothing* set model designed by Vicki Mortimer) by Ken Fleary

Staging the play

AIMS

To consider ways in which design can affect a production
To understand which decisions are directorial/design choices, and how Shakespeare's original intention is open to interpretation

- The production is set in a Sicilian country house, with the revolving walls offering many different opportunities for listening and observing. The world is observably Italian, with Juliet balconies and proud, romantic characters
- Ask the class to divide into groups and list five design elements in the play which are the National Theatre's rather than Shakespeare's. (some examples might be: the pool, the drum revolve, the wooden walls and walkways, the Juliet balconies, the abundance of food and drink on the table, the freshly dug grave for Hero or the large ornamental sword which Antonio tries to fight Claudio with)
- Now ask the groups to decide whether these decisions have a positive effect on the play. Does the pool help set the scene in the warm, relaxed Italian countryside, for instance, or add to the comedy of the gulling scenes?
- Discuss the results with the rest of the class
- Finally, ask the groups to design their own productions, deciding where they would choose to set the play, and thinking of at least five elements which they would include in their staging
- If you have time, you could ask the groups to create model boxes: these are mini-versions of the design made in a cardboard box which the designer uses to present their ideas to the director and creative team (see picture, left).

Design/character: post-show exercises

The masque (2)

AIMS

To consider the effect of masking on the action of the play
To experiment with different staging techniques
To explore character through staging

In the National Theatre production, the masque scene is staged with the male characters wearing masks, while the female characters wear no disguise. This does not prevent the female characters from recognising the men at different points in the play, but occasionally characters remove their masks for emphasis – for instance Don John, when he is telling Claudio that Don Pedro is in love with Hero.

For this exercise, the students will need to use the masks sent in their scrapbooks at the beginning of the project. You may wish to decorate the masks in order to make the exercise more fun visually.

- Divide the class into groups of three or four
- Give each group one or two of the short dialogues in the mask scene, between Hero and Don Pedro; Margaret and Balthasar; Ursula and Antonio; Don John, Borachio and Claudio; and Beatrice and Benedick
- Give each group two masks to work with
- Ask the groups to cast their scenes. One person in the group should be the director for each scene
- Now ask the groups to try the scenes with both characters in masks; then only the men masked, as in the NT production; then with only the women masked, and finally with no masks at all. They should discuss the effect of these different stages and the director should note down their preferred version and the reasons for their choice
- Ask the groups to feed their choices back to the class. If you have time, play some of the scenes, and ask the audience for their opinions

Design/theme: post-show exercises

Costume

[see worksheet 22]

AIMS

To consider the effects of costume on character and atmosphere
To understand directorial choice
To consider character through costume

The play makes several comments on fashion and clothing. This production has chosen a particular look and feel for the costumes in order to evoke atmosphere, time and place. In more than one place we see characters change their clothes or get dressed for a particular occasion. We also see Beatrice and Benedick ending up looking a mess when they fall into the pool.

Ask the class the following questions:

- What impression did the costumes make?
- Were the costumes authentic?
- What effect did the costumes have on the play overall?
- Were there any moments in the play where costume had a particular point to make – for instance, Claudio's costume in the epitaph scene, Benedick before and after shaving (this counts as costume!) or the different styles in which Beatrice covered and uncovered her hair?



Photo (Duke of Buckingham) © National Portrait Gallery, London

Music and dance

AIMS

To consider the significance of music in the production
To experiment with mood, atmosphere and meaning through music

The music and choreography of this production is very dynamic, and in keeping with the Italianate design

- Ask your class to consider the style of music and dance which they believe would work for a production of *Much Ado About Nothing*
- Ask the class to compile a soundtrack for the play
- They will need to identify the moments specified in the text where music is necessary, but they may decide on other moments where they believe music could enhance the mood or atmosphere
- If possible, play some of their choices in order to demonstrate and discuss different opinions

Variation: research project

- Ask your class to research the kind of original music Shakespeare might have had in mind in his production
- They could explore instruments and songs of the period, and discuss how these might affect the mood and quality of a performance in comparison with the music they heard at the National Theatre

The Globe Theatre is a particularly good source of information about original music

Character/narrative: post-show exercises

Where are they from?

AIMS

To explore directorial choices
To explore the comedy of the play
To consider the inherent qualities of the play which might make it feel Italian
To develop character choices

Shakespeare often mixes elements of foreignness and Englishness in his comedies. Ask the group if they think the NT production is very authentically Italian. In rehearsal directors sometimes ask the actors to play their scenes in different settings – sometimes extreme or unlikely ones – to see if they bring something funny or interesting to the performances. In this production, some of the accent choices may have been developed through experimentation.

- Choose a short scene or section your class knows well, and divide the class into appropriately-sized groups
- Ask each group to try playing their scene in the following ways, or make up any others you think they will enjoy:
 1. As very passionate Italians who don't speak much English
 2. As English aristocrats
 3. As 5-year-olds in the playground
 4. As cowboys on the ranch
 5. As special agents on a mission
 6. As the Spice Girls in their dressing room
- Ask the groups what might be interesting or funny about any of these interpretations. Which accents might they like to keep – or try on other characters?

Choices, choices...

[see worksheet 23]

AIMS

To understand the concept of interpretation
To see that there are very few right answers, only opinions
To experiment with scenes in order to come to individual opinions

In the NT production, when Don Pedro offers to woo Hero for Claudio, Claudio doesn't seem too happy.

- Ask the class if this is the way they had expected the scene to be played. It is a different interpretation from the Branagh film, for example
- Ask the group why Don Pedro makes this plan without Claudio getting a word in edgeways. What does it say about both characters?
- Ask the class if there are any other moments in the play where unexpected choices have been made. For instance, Margaret is not present at Hero's denunciation in the church, but later we see her crying
- Make a list of all these moments in a play, and discuss how successfully they work. If there are differences of opinion, try staging different versions of the scenes in discussion – perhaps your class will feel their interpretations make more sense, and this is always best proved in performance!

Narrative: post-show exercises

Detective work – some questions answered

[see worksheet 24]

AIMS

To deepen background understanding of the narrative
To understand the choices and decisions made in the production

- Ask the class whether the production answers any of the questions set by our Detective Games exercise?
- If not, ask your workshop leader what information they have from the rehearsal room which might tell us how the actors explained these questions for themselves, even if the answers aren't visible on the stage
- Are there any new questions which the production raised for your class?

Truffling part 2

AIMS

To consider the world and atmosphere of the play
To understand how the design supports that world

The balconies and windows in the NT stage design are a particularly helpful way to develop the Truffling exercise. In many scenes, musicians or householders stand in the lit windows, giving a sense of the world of the play which exists beyond the stage and inside the house.

- Ask your group to play the Truffling game again (see page 16)
- This time, they are the designers of the production, and they should imagine pictures, scenes and images that might appear in the windows – either at any time during the play, or at specific moments in the narrative.



Photo (members of the *Much Ado About Nothing* company, with the balconies and windows in the background) by Catherine Ashmore

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Much Ado About Nothing

Worksheet 1: fast forward version

Write your 10-sentence summary of *Much Ado About Nothing*

(remember: no sub clauses. Each sentence should have a clear point)

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Now write the group's agreed 10-point summary

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10



Much Ado About Nothing

Worksheet 2: 7, 3, 1

Write a 7-sentence summary of
Much Ado About Nothing

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

Now write a 3-sentence
summary

1

2

3

Finally, write a 1-sentence
summary

1





Worksheet 3: trailer in 5 images

In your group, agree 5 key points in the story which will appear in your *Much Ado About Nothing* trailer

1

2

3

4

5

In your group, now identify 5 key words to accompany each point (these can be words from the script, or ones you decide upon in your group)

1

2

3

4

5



Rehearsal photograph (members of the company) by Catherine Ashmore

Worksheet 4: detective games

There are several moments in the play where the characters refer to something that they have done, or plan to do, but the audience can only guess what has happened.

Answer the following questions, using the quote as evidence. Afterwards these questions will be discussed as a group.

- What happened between Beatrice and Benedick – did he break her heart?
“he lent it me a while, and I gave him use for it”
(Act 2, scene 1, line 211)
- How does Borachio find a way to ensure that Hero is out of the way so that he can set up the trick with Margaret?
“I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent” (Act 2, scene 2, lines 34-5)
- The circumstances surrounding the conflict between Don John and Don Pedro
“you have of late stood out against your brother...”
- What happened to Beatrice’s parents?
“my mother cried...”
- Where is Antonio’s son?
“how now brother, where is your son...?”
- Why doesn’t Beatrice know that Hero didn’t sleep in her room the night before the wedding?
“Until last night I have this twelve month been her bedfellow...”
- And what about Margaret apparently not having any idea that her actions have led to Hero’s accusation in the church?
“she hath always been just and virtuous...”
nb. in the film she gets it, but this isn’t in the play!





Worksheet 5: freeze-frame Borachio

Borachio says:

Do you hear me and let this Count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes: what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who in the night overheard me confessing to this man, how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments, how you disgraced her when you should marry her; my villainy they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death, than repeat over to my shame: the lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation; and briefly I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

In 5 points, pick out the sequence of events that Borachio narrates in this speech (you will later turn these into frozen images)

1

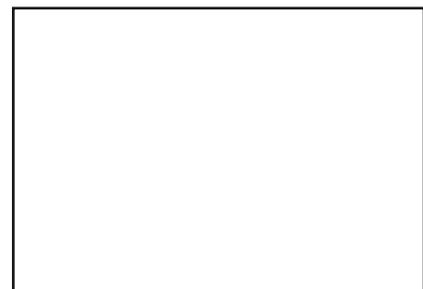
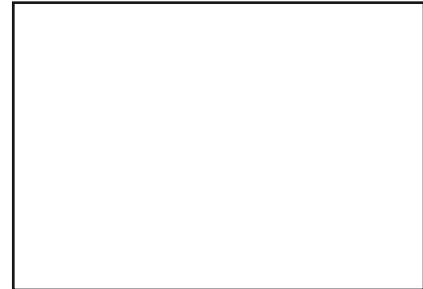
2

3

4

5

Storyboard this sequence in the 5 image boxes below



Worksheet 6: news coverage

Work as journalists or reporters covering the wedding of Hero and Claudio (or the trial of Don John and Borachio).

Paste your broadsheet article here

Write articles either as broadsheet or tabloid journalists, making the events as factual or sensational as you wish.

You could write with a specific bias, for instance as a feminist reporter, a traditionalist, a supporter of Don John's party, etc.

Paste your tabloid article here



Worksheet 7: more detective games

You are directing *Much Ado About Nothing*. A number of your cast ask you about their characters. Write your responses below:

1. The actor playing Benedick asks:
“When Benedick says ‘*this can be no trick*’, is he already completely convinced, or is he still trying to decide?”

2. The actress playing Beatrice asks:
“In the beginning, when I say I once lent my heart to Benedick, do I mean that I was once in love with him, and it still hurts?”

3. The actress playing Hero asks:
“My father tells me that if Don Pedro asks me to marry him I should say yes, but then I get Claudio. Which one of them do I actually want, and why?”

4. The actor playing Claudio asks:
“When I tell Don Pedro I’m willing to leave Hero and go back to Aragon with him straight after my wedding, am I eager or reluctant?”

5. The actor playing Benedick asks:
“Would I really have killed Claudio for Beatrice?”

6. The actress playing Beatrice asks:
“How do I play my speech at the end of the overhearing scene? Is it really romantic, or quite practical?”

7. The actor playing Claudio asks:
“How do I play the speech where I think Don Pedro has stolen Hero? Am I resigned, flippant, angry or tragic?”

8. The actress playing Hero asks:
“I hardly ever say anything, but lots of people talk about me and to me. How expressive should I be even though I don’t have any lines? Give me some specific examples of things to do in some of my scenes.”



Worksheet 8: the courtroom

Jot down some answers to these questions. You will use these answers to agree, as a class, how to stage the trial of Don John and Borachio

- Who are the jury (if there is one)?

- Who is the judge?

- Who is going to ask the questions?

- Who should be called as witnesses?

- Should anyone else be put in the dock?



Worksheet 9: streams of consciousness

Use the quote as a starting point to write a diary entry in character. Write for two minutes, without taking your pen off the paper. If you run out of ideas, doodle or repeat a word – but stay in character!

Beatrice

*Can this be true?...
Oh that I were a man*

Claudio

*I liked her ere I went to wars...
Friendship is constant in all other
things save in the offices and affairs
of love...*

Benedick

*This can be no trick...
Kill Claudio...*

Hero

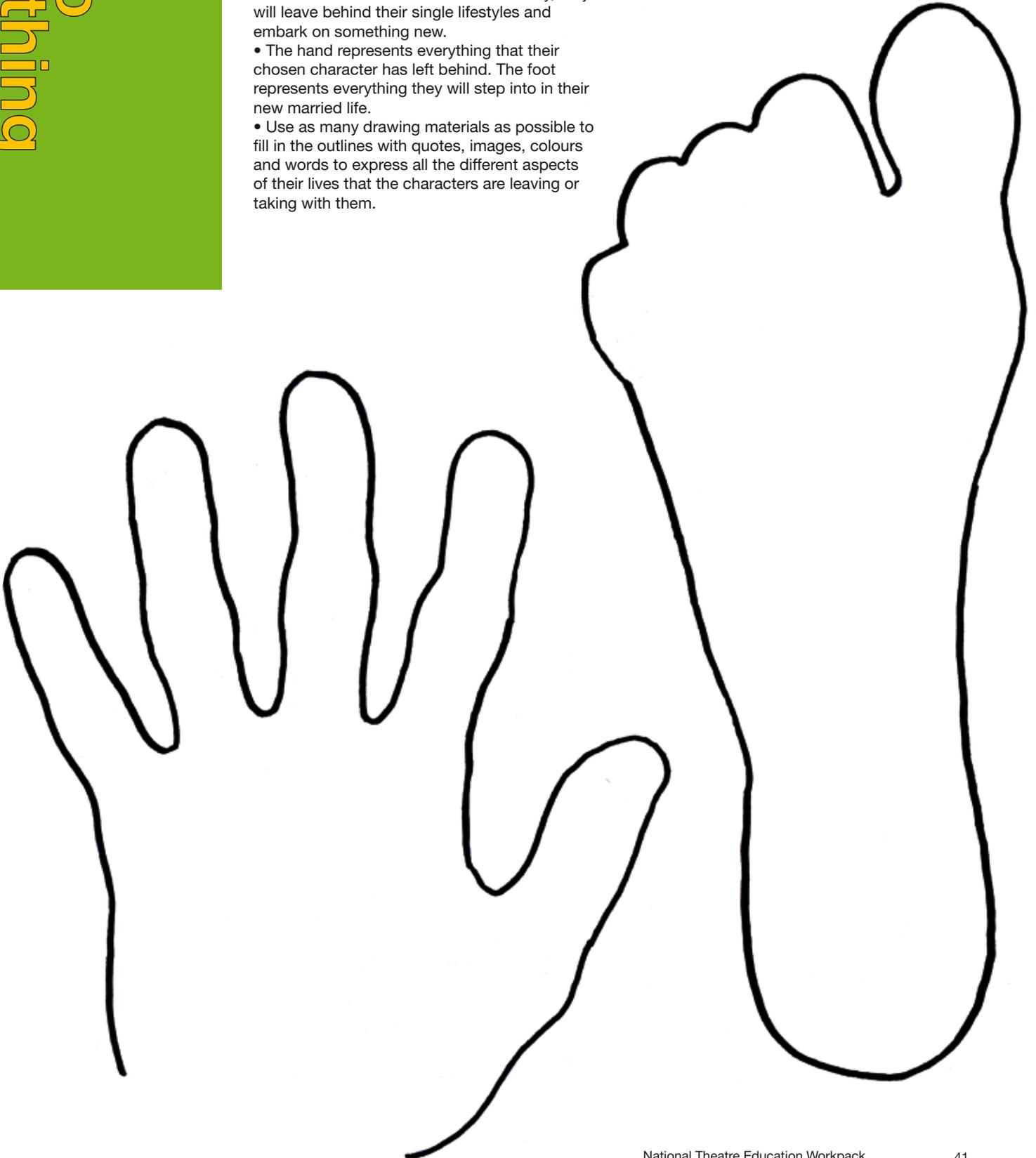
*Daughter, remember what I told you.
If the prince do solicit you in that kind,
you know your answer...
Fair Hero is won...*



Worksheet 10: hands and feet

Choose one character: Beatrice, Hero, Benedick, or Claudio

- When these characters choose to marry, they will leave behind their single lifestyles and embark on something new.
- The hand represents everything that their chosen character has left behind. The foot represents everything they will step into in their new married life.
- Use as many drawing materials as possible to fill in the outlines with quotes, images, colours and words to express all the different aspects of their lives that the characters are leaving or taking with them.



Worksheet 11: snapshot montages

In a group, you will be assigned a character from *Much Ado About Nothing*. Make a long list of words here to describe the character (a combination of language from the play, and your own words)

Now select up to 8 words or phrases from your list which best represent the character. Afterwards you will put the list together as a series of frozen images.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8



Worksheet 12: mapping character journeys

Map both Beatrice and Benedick's emotional journeys through the play. Do they intersect? Illustrate the maps with quotes or even illustrations of locations in the play

Beatrice start



Beatrice end



Benedick start



Benedick end



Worksheet 13: dating agency profiles

In character, write a description of yourself for a dating agency. It must be how the character sees themselves, not as you see them.

Character name:

Description:



Worksheet 14: handshake key words

Discuss in a group the key themes of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Write a list, below, to share with the wider group

Using your section of the speech handed out by your teacher, condense it into a 'telegram' or 'text message' of only the important words

Now choose which word is the most important from your section of the speech. Write it here. Afterwards you will create a frozen image of your key word

Key word:

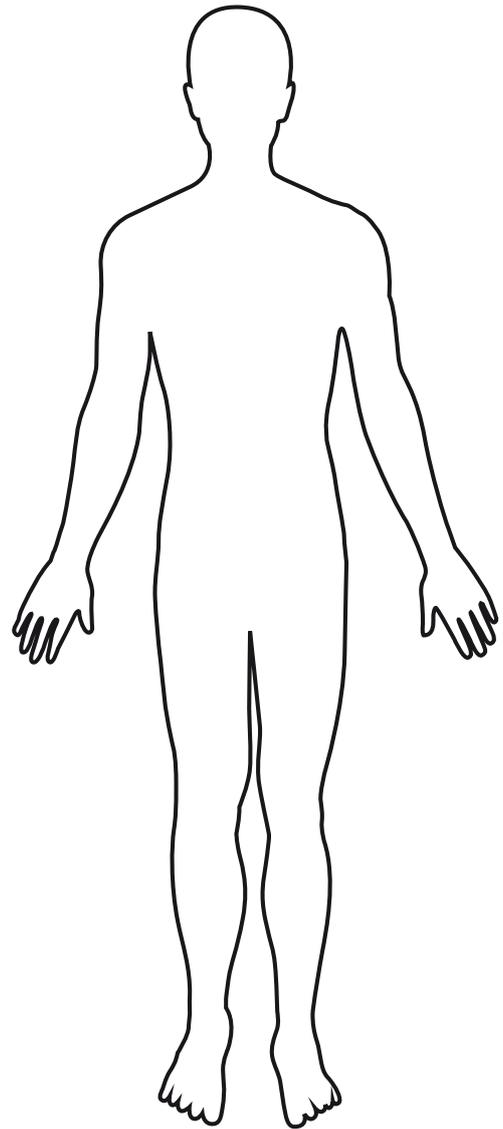
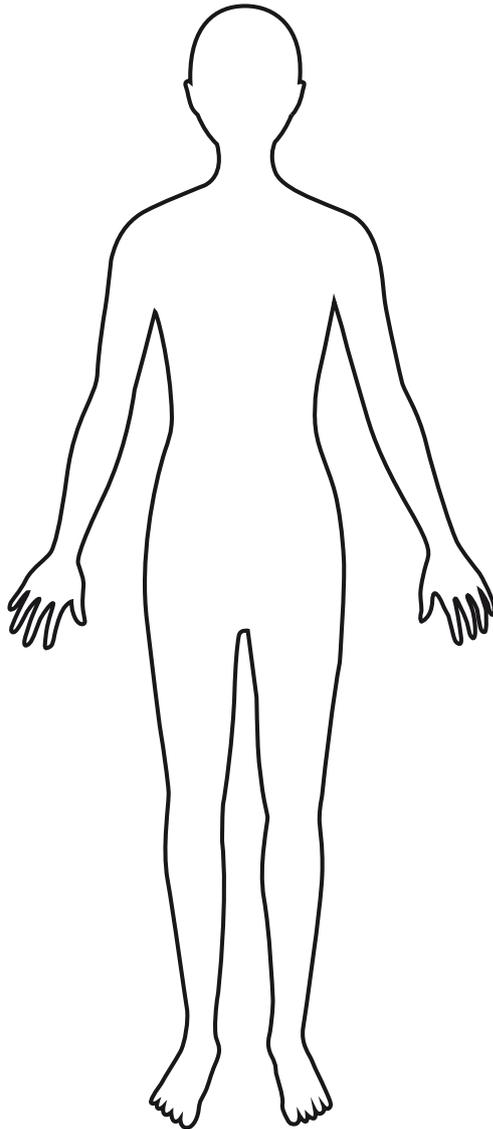


Worksheet 15: fashion design

Design character costumes for *Much Ado About Nothing*, and make sure the clothes demonstrate the characters' personalities as fully as possible. Be as extreme as you wish!



English woman, circa 1580 © Mary Evans Picture Library



Worksheet 16: a view of marriage

*For hear me, Hero, wooing, wedding and repenting is as a **Scotch jig**, a **measure** and a **cinquepace**: the first suit is hot and hasty like a Scotch jig (and full as fantastical), the wedding mannerly modest (as a measure) full of state and sincerity, and then comes Repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinquepace faster and faster, til he sink into his grave.*

Research the dances mentioned in Beatrice's speech and note your discoveries here

Now answer the following questions:

- Where else does dance occur in the play?
- How does it affect the mood in these scenes?
- Where does it represent freedom/formality/roleplay/celebration?



Worksheet 17: fridge magnet poetry

Choose some of the cut-out words from the play provided by your teacher, and stick them on this sheet to form poems and interesting images



Worksheet 18: fridge magnet insults

Choose some of the cut-out words from the play provided by your teacher, and put them together to create your own Shakespearean insults.

You can add 'thou' or any name of a fruit and vegetable to make sense of the words.

examples:

Thou stuffed dissembler

Thou halting carrot-companion



Worksheet 19: bad love poetry

Benedick attempts to write a love poem to Beatrice, but he discovers that this is one skill he does not have. Use some of the language of his speech (Act 5, scene 2, line 7 ff) – or anywhere else in the play if you prefer – to write a bad Elizabethan love poem to Beatrice



A portrait by Nicholas Hilliard, possibly of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex © The Gallery Collection/Corbis



Worksheet 20: epitaphs

Claudio has to write an epitaph to Hero – which is also not very good. Write a suitable epitaph which tells Hero's story in verse. If you have time, write epitaphs for the other characters at the ends of their lives!



Worksheet 21: post-it notes 2 (post-show exercise)

Write a summary of what was written on post-it notes about two of your favourite characters. These notes will be used as a basis for class discussion.

Now write a review of the characters here



Worksheet 22: costume (post-show exercise)

The play makes several comments on fashion and clothing. This production has chosen a particular look and feel for the costumes in order to evoke atmosphere, time and place. More than once we see characters change their clothes or get dressed for a particular occasion. We also see Beatrice and Benedick ending up looking a mess when they fall into the pool.

Write your responses to the following questions here.

What effect did the costumes have on the play overall?

What impression did the costumes make?

Were there any moments in the play where costume had a particular point to make – for instance, Claudio's costume in the epitaph scene, Benedick before and after shaving (This counts as costume!) or the different styles in which Beatrice covered and uncovered her hair?

Were the costumes authentic?



Photo (Duke of Buckingham) © National Portrait Gallery, London



Worksheet 23: choices, choices... (post-show exercise)

In the NT production, when Don Pedro offers to woo Hero for Claudio, Claudio doesn't seem too happy.

As a class group you will discuss what you thought of this interpretation, and of other moments in the NT production that were unexpected.

Make a list of five of these moments and try to describe why they were unexpected.

1

2

3

4

5



Worksheet 24: detective games 2... (post-show exercise)

Refer back to your answers to worksheets 4 and 7: 'detective games' and 'more detective games'. Did the production answer the questions raised?

Now write down any new questions which the production raised for yourself or your class

Write briefly here which questions the production successfully answered, and which it did not answer.

It answered:

It did not answer:

