

# Much Ado About Nothing: Plot Pre-Reading Activity

A younger brother is jealous of his older brother, and tries to cause him problems

Plays from Shakespeare's Time

How different is Much Ado from a modern sitcom?

Both

A woman is told by her father that she must marry someone.

Modern Plays

A policeman messes up an investigation because he is stupid.

A woman hides the fact that she fancies someone by making jokes about him.

# Much Ado About Nothing: Plot Pre-Reading Activity

Devised by Nora Ward at Nottingham Bluecoat School. She used this activity to introduce the class to plot elements in Much Ado, spark interest in the story before facing the language, and to follow a lesson on the differences between theatres in Shakespeare's time and today.

How it works:

Cut up the plot cards and enlarge the Venn diagram to A3 if groups are larger than two. In pairs or groups of four, pupils to choose a plot card and discuss where it best goes on the diagram. They need to come up with a consensus, and a reason for their choice. More able students were given blank cards to annotate with their reasons.

You can extend/change this activity to having the students move the cards into piles of stories they would find interesting and not interesting.

After the groups have finished, groups feed back some of their choices to the rest of the class, and the teacher then tells them that all of the plot ideas they have looked at take place in Much Ado.

The webaddress for this activity is:

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/muchadaplot.pdf>

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Our collaborative talk for learning activities are designed to:

...build on prior knowledge.

...move from concrete to abstract thinking.

...ensure everyone works with everyone else.

...extend social language into curriculum language.

...provide motivating ways to go over the same topic more than once.

## COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

Supporting a cooperative network of teaching professionals throughout the European Union to develop and disseminate accessible interactive teaching materials in all subject areas and for all ages.

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## BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops, swapshops and conferences throughout the European Union. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

\*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of speaking and listening. They provide teachers opportunities for assessment of speaking and listening.

\*They support differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

\*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in mother tongue and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

\*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

\*They are generally adaptable over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

\*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work more effectively with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/muchadaplot.pdf>

# Plots from plays- When were they written?



Plays from Shakespeare's  
Time

Both

Modern Plays

A man thinks his best mate fancies the same girl as him.

A younger brother is jealous of his older brother, and tries to cause him problems.

A group of friends goes to a costume party.

A woman is told by her father that she must marry someone.

A woman fakes her own death when she is accused of being promiscuous.

A woman hides the fact that she fancies someone by making jokes about him.

A group of friends trick a couple into admitting they fancy each other.

A policeman messes up an investigation because he is stupid.

A man challenges someone to a fight for being mean to a girl.