

Much Ado about Nothing: plot and character relationships

	Claudio	Benedick	Beatrice	Hero	Don John	Don Pedro
Claudio	X					
Benedick		X				
Beatrice			X			
Hero				X		
Don John					X	
Don Pedro						X

Daughter of Leonato, Governor of Messina.

Tells Claudio that Don Pedro really loves Hero.

A prince. Has been fighting wars in Italy.

Falls in love with Claudio at first sight.

Before the masked ball she says she will never marry.

Beatrice asks him to fight Claudio.

Much Ado about Nothing - activities on the plot and character relationships

Devised by Louise Keeton and Alison Fisher from Bury LEA at the Rochdale Collaborative Shakespeare workshop in December 2006

The webaddress for this activity is: <http://www.collaborativelearning.org/muchadoplotsrelationships.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.

Teacher's notes for Plot and Character Relationships Activities.

These activities consist of a set of cards, and a chart/table (which needs to be enlarged to A3) for students to complete. They are designed to help pupils get to grips with the complexities of the plot and relationships between characters.

Activity One.

Pupils work in groups of four. Each group needs a set of cards. The cards tell the story of Much Ado about Nothing from the point of view of different characters.

The aim of the activity is to place the cards in the correct order for each character. Pupils could each choose a particular character and then work as a group on the remaining names. By the end of this activity they should have a good idea of the plot as it is reinforced through the different characters.

Variations and follow up activities.

Weaker pupils would find it easier if characters are colour coded so they only need to order the information chronologically.

Pupils could write a diary or give a speech in character relating what has happened to them using the information on the chart.

Activity Two.

This is an information transfer activity and enables the pupils to record the information from Activity One in their own words and in a different format. Again, the pupils need to be in a group of four.

Each pupil needs a copy of the character table. There could also be a central copy for the group to use. They then re-use the set of cards, placing the information in the correct box. Not all the cards are relevant and some characters do not have a relationship and so that box will be blank.

Once the cards have been placed on the appropriate square the pupils write in the information. As well as reinforcing the information about the plot, this activity highlights relationships between characters and demonstrates where there is little interaction.

Much Ado about Nothing.

How do the different characters relate to each other?

Complete this chart/table using information from the cards that you used in the previous activity onto this chart

	Claudio	Benedick	Beatrice	Hero	Don John	Don Pedro
Claudio						
Benedick						
Beatrice						
Hero						
Don John						
Don Pedro						

Much Ado About Nothing - plot cards

Hero

Daughter of Leonato,
Governor of Messina.

Falls in love with Claudio
at first sight.

Gets engaged to
Claudio.

Helps Don Pedro to set up
Beatrice and Benedick

Seems to die at her
wedding, after being
called impure.

At the end of the play,
she is preparing to marry
Claudio.

Beatrice

Leonato's niece. Hero's best
friend. Angry with
Benedick about what
happened between them in
the past.

Argues with Benedick
when he returns from
the battle.

Before the masked ball
she says she will never
marry.

Dances with Benedick
and makes fun of him

Overhears Hero and Ursula
discussing Benedick's love
for her.

Falls in love with Benedick
and agrees to marry him.

Don Pedro

A prince. Has been
fighting wars in Italy.

Tells Claudio he will
help him to marry
Hero.

Dances with Hero at
the masked ball.

Much Ado About Nothing - plot cards

Plans to bring the two couples together.

He is tricked into believing he sees Hero with another man.

He accuses Hero of being impure at her wedding.

Don John

Half brother of Don Pedro. They don't get on.

Finds out that Don Pedro wants to help Claudio marry Hero.

Tells Claudio that Don Pedro really loves Hero.

Plans to make Claudio believe that Hero is not a virgin.

Asks Borachio to visit Margaret in Hero's room to deceive Claudio and Don Pedro.

Is arrested and punished for his deceit

Benedick

A Lord. Has been fighting wars in Italy. Angry with Beatrice.

Argues with Beatrice and makes fun of Claudio

Dances with Beatrice at the ball.

Overhears Don Pedro discussing Beatrice's love for Benedick.

Beatrice asks him to fight Claudio.

Agrees to marry Beatrice

Much Ado About Nothing

Claudio	Has been fighting wars in Italy. Serves Don Pedro as an officer.	Falls in love with Hero at first sight. Asks Don Pedro to help him to marry her.	Becomes engaged to Hero even though Don John has tried to make him believe that Don Pedro loves Hero.
Tricked into believing he sees Hero with another man.	At their wedding he accuses Hero of being impure.	Finds out that Hero is not dead, and they are again engaged.	