



RSC ACTIVITY TOOLKIT



MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

1 - THE SETUP

What is the play about?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#) and watch [this clip](#).
- A copy of Act 1 Scene 1, to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Watch the clip of Act 1 Scene 1 being performed by RSC actors [here](#).
- As you watch, write down any words that stand out or you find interesting.
- Based on the clip, and the words you wrote down, complete the following sentence: "I think *Much Ado About Nothing* will be a play about...."
- Now visit [this page](#) on the Shakespeare Learning Zone. Click 'Read the Scene and Explore.' You can click on the highlighted text to familiarise yourself further.
- Read the text and ask yourself: what is the relationship like between Beatrice and Benedick? Does one character lead, and the other follow, or are they evenly matched? What opinion do they have of each other? Think why this might be.
- Research the definition of the word 'Wit'. Are Benedick and Beatrice 'witty'? Is one character **more** witty than the other?
- Look at how Beatrice interacts with the Messenger in comparison to Benedick. Pretend you are a judge, scoring points each time one character outwits or trumps the other.
- Think again on the sentence "I think *Much Ado About Nothing* will be a play about....". Has your definition changed?

EXTENSION

- What does Beatrice mean when she asks for Signor 'Mountanto'? Watch [this clip](#) of this scene in rehearsal where this term is discussed (from 0:27 onwards).
- Hero correctly assumes Beatrice is using a nickname to refer to Benedick. Why does Hero know this? Perhaps Hero and Beatrice have spoken about Benedick in the past. Write this conversation in your own words.
- The genre of *Much Ado About Nothing* is comedy. What is a comedy? Research 'comedy' as a dramatic genre.

2 - THE STORY

What are the facts of the play?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#).

ACTIVITY

- Visit the Plot page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#) and read through the 10 sections of the Plot Overview.
- Click "Test Yourself" and try and re-arrange the plot in the correct order.
- Imagine you are now a journalist who is writing a short 150-word article summarising this story. What are the essential facts? Also notice when writing your article: is anything you are saying your opinion?
- The plot summary on this page is very straightforward. As a journalist, what more would you like to know to better report the story? Write these questions down.

EXTENSION

- For a more in-depth synopsis, take a look at the Scene-by-Scene page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#).
- Browse the breakdown of each scene, potentially trying to find some answers to your questions from the above activity.
- Modern playwrights and screenwriters sometimes use a storyboard to 'see' the overall arc of their story. Using Post-it notes, summarise each scene into one short sentence and lay out the play on a wall or board. Perhaps you may want to colour code the scenes depending on a particular theme or character thread that links them for you?
- Take a look at the Timeline page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#) and compare your scene titles with those here.

3 - THE CHARACTERS

Who are the main protagonists of this story?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A piece of paper, landscape (minimum size A4) or a large notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#).

ACTIVITY

- Take a landscape piece of paper and divide the page into 5 columns. At the top of each column write the following characters: Benedick, Beatrice, Hero, Claudio (leave space for Don John - see Extension).
- Give each character a simple one-line summary: e.g. *Benedick: a soldier and a bachelor*. Write this below their name as a subtitle.
- Go to the Characters page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#). Click 'Test Yourself' and play the game of Who's Who.
- For each of your characters, think about what they want **the most** at the moment we first meet them in the play. Write in the form '*Benedick wants...*' It can be as simple as '*Benedick wants to be free.*'
- Now repeat the above activity but this time for a moment in Act 5. What are the wants of your characters now? Write them at the bottom of the column.
- Ask yourself: Does each character get what they want? How do their wants change? How do their wants clash with the wants of other characters? Think about the 'journey' of the characters – where do they begin and where do they end up?

EXTENSION

- Do the same exercise for the play's villain, Don John. We know less about Don John than the other main characters. What does Don John want and why?
- Go back to your main sheet from the activity above. Fill in the middle sections of the columns by 'mapping' the character's wants as the story progresses. Maybe choose 2 or 3 pivotal moments between Act 1 and Act 5 for each character and write what you believe they want most at these pivotal points. Keep the sentences simple.
- Give each of the five characters another one-line summary, this time describing them at the end of the play. Why did you choose these words?

4 - BEATRICE AND BENEDICK AT WAR

What's behind Beatrice and Benedick's warring words in Act 1 Scene 1?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#).
- A copy of Act 1 Scene 1, to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Go to the Language page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#) and click 'Read the Scene and Explore.' You can click on the highlighted text to familiarise yourself further.
- If you have completed Activity 1, think again about the answer to the question: What is the relationship like between Beatrice and Benedick?
- Ask yourself: how are they using words and language? What is their tone?
- Now, read the scene aloud with the following assumption: you want your words to wind up the other character. Stamp your foot on any word you think makes your point clearer. You are only allowed to stamp your foot on **one word per sentence**. Don't overthink it, keep reading and stamp when it feels correct.
- Reflect on which words you stamped on? What do they have in common, and what type of words are they?
- Watch the clip 'Play Scene in Rehearsal' on the [same page](#) of the Shakespeare Learning Zone. Notice how the actors and director interpret the words in many different ways – there is one point where they play the scene as if flirting! Did this work?
- Find some key quotes and write them down.

EXTENSION

- Read the scene. Circle or highlight any time an animal is mentioned. The characters' language seems to be full of animal imagery. Why might this be, and what effect does this have?
- When Beatrice says, "I know you of old," it is clear that Beatrice and Benedick know each other in some way before the war. Speculate in what capacity you think this might be.
- Write a diary entry from the point of view of both Beatrice and Benedick, from the night before the play's action begins. How do they both feel about maybe seeing the other person again?

5 - CLAUDIO AND DON PEDRO'S PLAN

Why does Don Pedro decide to woo Hero on behalf of Claudio?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A copy of Act 1 Scene 1, to read either on the page or onscreen.
- A camera
- A mirror

ACTIVITY

- Stand in front of the mirror pretending to be a character with extremely high power, or high social status. Take a photo. Then do the same exercise for a person with very low status.
- Look at the photos side-by-side, what do you notice? What have you instinctively chosen to do with your body? Look out for things like the body language, facial expression, arm and hand positions. Write some notes describing what you notice.
- Interactions between the characters (and therefore some of the story) can be communicated non-verbally in live performance; communication is not solely restricted to the choice of words spoken. It is an actor's job to interpret the language written in the text to show mannerisms and behaviour.
- Read Act 1 Scene 1, from Line 77 onwards. Rank Don Pedro, Benedick and Claudio in terms of social status. They may not be that far apart, but we might be able to notice a difference from how the characters speak to each other, and from what we know about the men already (e.g. age, standing, reputation etc).
- How does the tone change once Benedick leaves the room? (See also Activity 11: Verse and Prose)
- Think about the following statement: *'For Claudio, raising his social position is more important than love.'* Find quotes here that agree or disagree with this.
- Why does Don Pedro agree to woo Hero on behalf of Claudio? Do you think this was what Claudio was expecting when he says, *"your Highness now may do me good?"*
- Collect the key quotes from this scene.

EXTENSION

- Place a chair in front of a table. Pretend the table is Don Pedro's and he is already sat behind it on the other side.
- Read Act 1 Scene 1 from Benedick's exit (Line 110).
- Now stand up and show Claudio approaching the table, wanting to sit down to ask Don Pedro about Hero. What is his body language like? How does it feel?
- Now sit down and, in the margin of the script, write down the movements of the characters: decide on what line Claudio moves, what line he sits, does he stay sat down? Does Don Pedro stay sat down? This is called 'Blocking.' (Blocking is when during rehearsals, directors and actors decide the movement and positioning of the characters around the stage.)
- In a different colour, now justify why the characters move when they do.
- Go to the Performing page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#) and answer the questions under 'Key Decisions to Make: Status and Hierarchy'.

6 - DON JOHN'S PLAN

What are Don John's motives?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A copy of Act 1 Scene 3 to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Read Act 1 Scene 3 up until Borachio's entrance. Underline all the reasons you can find that might explain Don John's melancholy.
- Read Don John's short speech (from line 8) starting, *"I had rather be a canker in a hedge."* Circle or highlight any words or phrases that stand out to you (including those you may not understand).
- Think about the mood of this speech. Summarise Don John's tone in one adjective, and then re-write the speech in your own words, now as if he is alone, and it is a text message to Conrad.
- Go back to the original text and continue reading the scene after Borachio's entrance. What does Borachio have to say? Does Don John's mood change? Decide on a new adjective to describe Don John's tone once he hears Borachio's news.
- Finally, try and find any reasons why Don John wants to plot against Claudio specifically. Do you think he is justified?

EXTENSION

- *"You have of late stood out against your brother."* Conrad explains. What did Don John do? Look at the interaction (or lack of!) between the brothers when Leonato welcomes Don John in Act 1 Scene 1 (Line 59).
- Look back at the text message activity above. Pretend that you accidentally have sent the message to your brother Don Pedro. Compose a response, noticing how your tone changes now you are speaking to Don Pedro.
- If you have completed Activity 4, you may have looked at the use of animal imagery in the first scene between Beatrice and Benedick. Notice how Don John casts himself as an animal in his speech. How does this use of imagery differ to Act 1 Scene 1?

7 - THE MASKED DANCE

What happens at The Masked Dance?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with. (Optional: Post-It Notes)
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit these pages on the story [Scene-by-Scene](#) and [Past Productions](#).
- A copy of Act 2 Scene 1 to read either on the page or onscreen.
- Things for mask-making and decorating! (Coloured pens, paint, scissors etc)

ACTIVITY

- Go to the Scene-by-Scene page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#) and read the summary of Act 2 Scene 1.
- During this scene, characters are celebrating a masquerade ball. Research the history behind masquerade balls.
- The use of masks here also has a dramatic purpose; disguising not just the characters' faces but their true intentions.
- If Beatrice and Benedick could design their masks from scratch, what would they look like? You can base your design on the conventional masquerade mask shape, or indeed something different all together!
- Go to the Past Productions page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#) and click on 'The Masked Dance' for inspiration.

EXTENSION

- Wear your masks and practice with a housemate the interaction between Beatrice and Benedick during the party (lines 51 to 66).
- Do you think the characters can see through the disguise?

8 - THE GULLINGS (PART 1)

How are Beatrice and Benedick tricked?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit these pages on [Benedick's Gulling](#) and [Beatrice's Gulling](#).
- A copy of Act 2 Scene 3 and Act 3 Scene 1 to read either on the page or onscreen.
- A recording device (e.g. voice note app).

ACTIVITY

- In Shakespeare's time, '**gulling**' was when someone was tricked or conned. (The word is related to *gullible*.)
- Go to the two webpages on the Shakespeare Learning Zone on [Benedick's Gulling](#) and [Beatrice's Gulling](#). Read the introductions and click on 'Read the Scene and Explore'. This will give you edited versions of each scene. (Use the highlighted text to discover more).
- Focus first on Beatrice's scene. Alone, or with a member of your house, record yourselves reading Hero and Ursula's lines (up until their exit.)
- Press play on the recording and find an appropriate hiding space in your room (e.g. under a table) – take paper and a pen with you.
- As the 'concealed' Beatrice, listen to the recording, and note down words or phrases which really stick out to you. Also make a note at the end of how it feels to be hidden, eavesdropping on the other voices.
- Back at your desk, reflect how Hero and Ursula managed to hold your (Beatrice's) attention. How do Hero and Ursula manage to convince her of Benedick's love?
- Now, go back to Benedick's scene and read the edit on Shakespeare Learning Zone.
- Notice what is similar and what is different in this scene? Why does Shakespeare have Benedick speak asides to the audience? Are the topics the men talk about different to the women?

EXTENSION

- Record Benedick's scene in the same way as with Beatrice's above. (Speaking the lines of Claudio, Don Pedro and Leonato – leave silent gaps for Benedick's asides).
- Whilst listening, as if Benedick, make a note of the key moments where you are convinced. If this conversation were just between Claudio and Don Pedro, without Leonato, would you be so sure?
- Play the scene again speaking Benedick's asides in the gaps.

- Go back to Beatrice's scene, and think about any asides she might make. Decide on three moments where she speaks, and write the question or thought going through her mind at that point.

9 - THE GULLINGS (PART 2)

What does it take to perform the perfect gulling?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit these pages on [Benedick's Gulling](#) and [Beatrice's Gulling](#).
- A copy of Act 2 Scene 3 and Act 3 Scene 1 to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Load the two pages on [Benedick's Gulling](#) and [Beatrice's Gulling](#), and scroll down each page to watch examples of the scenes in performance.
- How has this production interpreted the scenes? Write down all the extra decisions you notice that have been made that are not in the original text.
- Choose two funny moments from each scene that you thought stood out and write down why you think they are funny.
- Some of the comedy comes from watching these characters having to 'put on a performance.' How good at acting are the various characters – do some go too far, or some not enough?
- What are the lines that are most successful at persuading Beatrice and Benedick that this is real? Write down the key quotes from both scenes.
- Find a large piece of paper and give it the title '*The Ultimate Guide to Gulling*' – write down 5 points that any 'guller' needs to do to have complete success.

EXTENSION

- Implement your 'Guide to Gulling' by planning a con with someone in your house! If feeling brave, try it out. Are you going to recruit accomplices? Keep it harmless of course!

10 - COMPARING SOLILOQUIES

What is the effect of speaking directly to the audience?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with (3 different colours).
- A copy of Act 2 Scene 3 and Act 3 Scene 1 to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Research the definition of 'Soliloquy.'
- Read Beatrice and Benedick's soliloquies after they emerge from their hiding places during the gulling scenes. (Benedick: Act 2 Scene 3 Line 97, Beatrice: Act 3 Scene 1 Line 107)
- Write down any simple similarities and differences you notice about the speeches. Think about form, tone and choice of language.
- Notice how Benedick's speech is one flowing piece of *Prose*. Beatrice's speech is structured into poetic lines of *Verse*. (See Activity 11 'Verse and Prose')
- Using three different colours, divide each speech into the following: QUESTIONS, STATEMENTS and REALISATIONS. A single sentence may be defined as more than one.
- Stand in the middle of the room and divide the walls around you as follows: the wall in front of you as REALISATIONS, and the two to your left and right as either QUESTIONS or STATEMENTS.
- Speak both speeches, directing your text to the appropriate wall.
- Evaluate how it feels to change who you are speaking to, at moments when the thought shifts too.
- What effect does this have on the audience?

EXTENSION

- Watch the video *Exploring a Soliloquy* [here](#). (Actor Paapa Essiedu is talking about *Hamlet*, but his points can be applied to other soliloquies in verse.)
- Think about the three topics that were explored in the video: Punctuation, Sounds and Line Endings. Circle or make a note of examples where these elements seem interesting to you. (NB Benedick's speech is not in verse and so, doesn't have line endings.) What effects do these interesting moments have on the listener?

11 - VERSE AND PROSE

What are the dramatic effects of verse and prose?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to watch [this clip](#).
- A copy of Act 1 Scene 1, Act 2 Scene 3 and Act 3 Scene 1 to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Watch the RSC Education video on iambic pentameter [here](#).
- Look at Beatrice's soliloquy in Act 3 Scene 1. Tap out the rhythm whilst reading the words. Does the rhythm fit? Highlight any moments where the regular ten-syllable line of iambic pentameter is irregular e.g. in this speech there are two lines that have **eleven** syllables. Can you think why this might be, and how this break from the regular rhythm might affect the actor's delivery?
- Research the definition of 'prose'.
- Shakespeare uses the two styles – *verse* and *prose* – frequently in this play. The shift between them can represent a shift in emotional registers.
- Another clear moment where the form shifts is in Act 1 Scene 1 Line 110. Familiarise yourself with this moment and consider 3 reasons why Claudio and Don Pedro shift from prose to verse here.
- If verse and prose were people, think about how you would describe them in adjectives. How do the differences in these two forms affect the drama?

EXTENSION

- From what you have discovered about the uses of both verse and prose, ask yourself: despite Beatrice and Benedick broadly undergoing very similar experiences in the gulling scenes, their responses are very different. Why does Benedick respond in prose and Beatrice in verse?

12 - THE WATCH AND DOGBERRY

Why does Dogberry speak the way he does?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#).
- A copy of Act 3 Scene 3 to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Look at the Characters page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#).
- Click on Dogberry and familiarise yourself with his character.
- Read Act 3 Scene 3 up until Dogberry's exit (Line 34). This is our first introduction to Dogberry (where he is choosing the watch, who will stand guard over the city.)
- Begin to highlight certain words that Dogberry uses incorrectly, or make no sense at all! Can you identify the similar word Dogberry was actually meaning to use? (When someone mistakes a word for a similar sounding word, it is called a *malapropism*.)
- Come up with your own Dogberry phrases. Think up some standard phrases you may use around the house e.g. "I'd love a cup of tea." Knowing that Dogberry tries to speak over-formally and also has the habit of using malapropisms, can you convert your phrases to sound like Dogberry?
- Stand up and perform your new phrases. Perhaps try them out on your family or housemates! What is their reaction?
- Why do the audience find Dogberry funny? What effect does Dogberry have on the drama?

EXTENSION

- Go to the Language Analysis page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#).
- Read the extract of Act 3 Scene 5 and find the Malapropisms, Proverbs and Waffle.
- Complete the missing sections of the 'Point, Evidence & Explanation' grid.

13 - THE WEDDING

How significant is Claudio's rejection of Hero?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with. (Optional: Post-It Notes)
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#).
- A copy of Act 4 Scene 1 to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Go to the Scene-by-Scene page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#).
- Read the summary of Act 4 Scene 1, to familiarise yourself with the scene, and then read the scene in full.
- Divide a large piece of paper, or notepad into squares, or take a stack of Post-It notes.
- Summarise the plot of the wedding scene in brief statements; focusing on key 'beats'. (e.g. *Hero faints*.) Order the storyboard in the order of what happens in the scene.
- Under each plot point, now thought-track the main characters. Start with Leonato, Hero and Claudio. If you have time add Beatrice and Benedick. Thought-tracking is describing what character is thinking or asking themselves at any given moment. Keep the sentences short and snappy.
- Notice the complete reversal of atmosphere by Claudio's accusations. Why does Claudio decide to wait until the church to accuse Hero?
- Collect key quotes from this scene.

EXTENSION

- Now think of the scene visually and create your own storyboard of the scene's plot.
- Divide your paper again into the same number of squares or panels. Draw a picture within each square until you have your story complete.
- Add quotes from the play in speech bubbles or some of the characters' thoughts and reactions.
- Write a diary entry for both Hero and Claudio the morning of the wedding, drawing on what you know about the events in the play.

14 - HONOUR AND HERO'S 'DEATH'

What is 'honour'?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A copy of Act 4 Scene 1 to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Read Leonato's speech after Hero has fainted (Lines 111-134). Underline all the metaphors.
- Think about the concept of *honour* in Shakespeare's time. For a woman, honour was linked to her chastity and virtue. How significant would losing your honour be for a woman and her family? If you have completed Activity 13, think about this in light how the characters react to Claudio's accusation.
- Ask yourself: Why does Leonato choose to believe Claudio and not his daughter?
- Turn to the Friar's speech, from lines 191-234. (Ignore Leonato's question at line 200).
- Stand up and speak the speech aloud. Turn sharply in a new direction every time you perceive a change of thought in the speech.
- Explore the reasons why the death plan is made, in the context of Hero's future.
- Compose Hero's response to the plan. How does she feel? Does she agree with the Friar's plan, and that her fake death is the only option? Does she still want to marry Claudio?

EXTENSION

- Go to the Language Analysis page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#) and click on 'Analysing the Themes: Respect and Reputation'. Consider all the questions here and answer them.

15 - "KILL CLAUDIO"

Why do Beatrice and Benedick declare their love now?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#).
- A copy of Act 4 Scene 1 to read either on the page or onscreen.
- (Optional: Camera)

ACTIVITY

- Go to the Act 4 Scene 1 page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#).
- Scroll down and load the 'Scene in Performance' clip. **Don't allow the video to play straight away.** Instead, click along the timeline every 30 seconds. (0:30, 1:00, 1:30... etc) At each freeze-frame, write down observations about the positions of the two actors on stage in relation to each other, and their body language. What story does this tell? Take screenshots, or photos of each freeze-frame.
- Without playing the video, go back to the text and pick out quotes which you feel summarise each image perfectly.
- Now watch the scene in performance.
- This scene, especially after the disastrous wedding, is incredibly emotional and is a key turning point in the play. Why do the characters reveal their love for each other at this moment?

EXTENSION

- Compare this conversation with Act 1 Scene 1. What differences can you identify between the language the characters use in the first scene and Act 4 Scene 1?
- Watch the actors Michelle Terry and Edward Bennett discuss their interpretation of the scene in [this clip](#).
- Do you agree with their thoughts?

16 - THE SECOND WEDDING

Does Claudio learn any lessons?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#).
- A copy of Act 5 Scene 4 to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Go to the Character Analysis page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#).
- Click 'Interrogate Claudio' and fill in the table with your evidence and explanations.
- Read Act 5 Scene 4 from Claudio and Don Pedro's entrance. Draw a new table and now answer the following question: Does Claudio learn from his mistakes? Make 2 points and find evidence and explanation to back up your points.
- If you have completed Activity 5, we thought about the following statement: *'For Claudio, raising his social position is more important than love.'* What are your thoughts about this now?
- The marriage of Hero and Claudio happens off-stage. Plan the wedding! Write Claudio and Hero's vows to each other, and Benedick's best man's speech. Do the characters reference the recent events?

EXTENSION

- What is Shakespeare's opinion of marriage? Is he a cynic or a romantic?
- Write 'cynical' and 'romantic' on two separate pages and give reasons for each. Back up your points with quotes from the text.

17 - STAGING THE PLAY

How have previous directors staged *Much Ado About Nothing*?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#).
- (Optional: A large sheet of paper, and materials to create a Mood Board).

ACTIVITY

- Go to the Setting page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#).
- Take a look at the gallery and notice the various interpretations of Messina in past productions of *Much Ado About Nothing*.
- Directors and designers work together to come up with a concept of how they want the set to look and feel. Some directors use artistic license and do not base their interpretations on real-life Italy we know in the world today. For example, the 2014 RSC production set the play in a British country house that was used to nurse wounded soldiers during and after WW1.
- Where might you want to set the play if you were the director? To help, write down some adjectives that describe the world of the play.
- You now have the task of designing your own sets. Begin to think about what you see defining the world you are imagining.
- Create a 'mood board' for your production, either digitally or as a collage using your own drawings or old newspapers and magazines. A mood board can help a designer to think about the overall impression they want the audience to have of a place. This can be a collection of colours, textures, fabrics, styles of clothing, buildings, art work and anything else that you see which inspires you. In your mood board, try to label the things you add to help you remember your thought process.

EXTENSION

- Go to the Shakespeare Learning Zone page on 'Performing Much Ado' [here](#).
- Go through the 'Key decisions to make' tab and read all the questions under the subcategories: 'Status and Hierarchy', 'The Trial', and 'Gender Roles'.
- Do further research into past productions of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Find images or reviews to discover that director's interpretation.
- Begin to answer the questions on the page yourself, basing your decisions on the mood board you have just created.

18 - THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE AND WAR

How are words used towards others in the play?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A piece of note paper, or a notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit [this page](#).
- A copy of Act 1 Scene 1, and Act 5 Scene 1 to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- From all the activities so far, gather all the quotes you have collected. Draw an image that summarises each quote. Stand and speak the quotes; recognise their sounds and the effect hearing the words aloud has.
- Go to the Language Analysis page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#).
- Click on 'Analysing the Imagery' and work through the examples of Animal Imagery, Sickness and Disease Imagery, and War Imagery. Do any of your quotes contain examples of these?
- Look at Act 5 Scene 1 and find evidence that Claudio didn't realise how serious Benedick is.
- Compare the language of Claudio in Act 1 Scene 1, to Act 5 Scene 1. Are there similarities or differences? How closely related is the language of love and the language of war? How does Benedick eventually make Claudio realise he is serious about his challenge?

EXTENSION

- Pick a key moment in the play from the point of view of one character. Invent your own metaphor or simile to describe what you are seeing. Think about animals, sickness or war to keep in theme with other imagery from the play.

19 - BEATRICE'S JOURNEY

Does Beatrice change during the action of the play?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A piece of note paper, or a notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit these pages on [Character Relationships](#) and [Character Analysis](#).

ACTIVITY

- On a blank page, draw an outline of Beatrice. Think about words and adjectives that Beatrice might use to describe herself at the beginning of the play. Write these words on the inside of the body.
- On the outside, write words that others might use to describe Beatrice. Is there a difference between Beatrice's own opinion of herself and what others think of her?
- Use the Character Relationships page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#) to help with this activity (Click on Beatrice's icon).
- Go to the Character Analysis page on the Shakespeare Learning Zone [here](#) and click on 'Interrogate Beatrice'. Watch the video of actress, Michelle Terry talking about Beatrice's journey.
- As Michelle Terry suggests: Act 3 Scene 1 (her gulling scene) is a moment in Beatrice's life where '*nothing will ever be the same again.*' Think about the gulling scene and what Beatrice overhears Hero and Ursula say about her. (See Activity 8). What qualities do Hero and Ursula describe and poke fun at? Circle these qualities and descriptions if you have them written down on your Beatrice outline.
- Now draw a new outline for Beatrice at the end of the play. How have the words changed? Are the opinions of herself and the opinions of others more closely aligned?

EXTENSION

- Design Beatrice's bedroom, or another private space that is hers. What does she have on the walls? What music is playing?
- Imagine you are Beatrice at the end of the play. Write and record a speech for your past self. What do you think she would want to advise herself about? What has she now realized?

20 - SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES

How does this play compare to other Shakespearean comedies?

WHAT YOU NEED

- A notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection to research definitions.

ACTIVITY

- Think about the word **Comedy** and what it means in a dramatic context. Have a go at writing a definition of Comedy, then look up a definition online: how well do your definitions match?
- Think of other Shakespeare Comedies you may know. Take a piece of paper and divide the sheet in half, with the titles 'Similarities' and 'Differences'.
- From what you know about *Much Ado About Nothing*, and anything you know about any other Comedies, write down any similarities and differences you notice in the plays. This can be anything relating to their plots, character types, structures, titles etc. An example for a similarity could be: *Characters get married in Act 5.*
- *Much Ado About Nothing* is also known for including quite dark themes and elements of tragedy. Look up the definition of **Tragedy** and think about any tragedies you know. Do you recognise any tragic elements in *Much Ado About Nothing*?

EXTENSION

- Create your own Model Box for the world of this play. A model box is scaled down version of the stage, used by designers to demonstrate how the set of a play will look, feel and move.
- Use drawings or mood boards to start your design, thinking about how you want the set to feel first. Once you are happy with your chosen inspiration, think about how you might start to share this idea as a model. You could use an old cereal box, shoebox or build something from scratch.
- What scenery will you use, and will there be any landmarks or features on stage? How will you try to show the world of the play to the audience? For example, can you tell from the set that this is going to be comedy? Are there references to the recent war?