

LITERATURE 4A

TEACHER'S NOTES

AUTHOR: William Shakespeare
TITLE: *Much Ado About Nothing* (Act V)
THEMES: Tricks, deceit (unit 12)
WRITING: Plot
THINK STYLE: Shakespeare's English

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William Shakespeare (1564–1616) was born in Stratford-Upon-Avon, England. His works include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (first performance, 1605), *King Lear* (1606) and *Macbeth* (first performance, 1611).

We have very little factual information about William Shakespeare's life. He was born and went to school in Stratford-upon-Avon. He married at the age of 18 and then went to London where he worked as an actor. A few years later, he started writing plays which were performed by his theatre company. He wrote most of his 38 plays between 1589 and 1613. The plays are usually divided into three groups: histories (*King John*, *Henry V*), comedies (*Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice*) and tragedies (*Julius Caesar*, *Romeo and Juliet*). He also wrote 154 sonnets and two narrative poems. Shakespeare's plays are still very popular today and are performed in countries all over the world.

INTRODUCTION

Ask students what they know about Shakespeare and his works. Write any ideas on the board in note form. Use the information in the *About the author* box to provide an introduction. Ask if students know any of the plays mentioned. You could also ask them if they know of any versions of his plays, for example *Romeo + Juliet* (1996) starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes. Depending on the class, it may be appropriate to use L1 at this stage.

START THINKING ...

- 1 Draw students' attention to the film still at the top of the worksheet. Elicit responses to the questions: *What can you see in the first picture?* (three women at the front wearing masks) *Where do you think they are?* (at a ball or party) *Why do you think they are wearing masks?* (to disguise themselves, it's like a fancy dress party).

Organise the class into pairs or small groups. Set a time limit of a few minutes for students to discuss the questions. Then ask students for their opinions. Encourage them to back up their answers with examples. If you have students from different backgrounds, it might be interesting to hear about wedding traditions in different countries.

- 2 Draw students' attention to the text above the film still which 'sets the scene' and clarify understanding. Play the audio. When students have read and listened

to the text once, allow time to check unfamiliar words in the glossary.

Optional extension

Ask some comprehension questions to check general understanding of the text.

- 3 Students read through the questions. Check for understanding and remind them to refer closely to the text to find the answers.

Answers

1 T 2 F 3 DS 4 T 5 F 6 T

- 4 Students read the text again. Discuss the questions and answers with the class.

Suggested answers

1 No. He asks to see the woman's face. He then says 'I will be your husband if you like me'. He isn't very enthusiastic, but probably doesn't mind. 2 Yes. She says 'The real Hero was dead while the lies live. And as surely as I live, I am innocent.' She's saying that Claudio thought she was dead which was untrue. It follows that the lies about her being unfaithful are also untrue. 3 Yes. Hero says 'It's a poem about her love for Benedick.' She is probably being cautious because she knows that other people have been interfering and may have been lying.

VOCABULARY

- 5 Read through the sentences one at a time to check comprehension of any unknown vocabulary. Working individually, students complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in the glossary. Ask individual students for answers.

Answers

1 chapel 2 confronted 3 moderately 4 trick
5 pretends 6 masks

Optional extension

Ask students which facts they find interesting or surprising and why. Point out that these facts all relate to Shakespeare's life and works.

- 6 Ask students to read the text again and to underline five more words that are new to them. Ask them to write the words in sentences. They then read their sentences in pairs and correct each other's mistakes.

ROLE PLAY

- 7 Organise the class into pairs. Read the instruction and check that students understand what they

are going to do. Ask two students to read the first part of the conversation. Set a time limit of 5–10 minutes. Monitor and offer support while students are preparing their role play. Students should write their scripts. Encourage as many students as possible to perform their role plays. Consider asking groups to perform to each other. The ‘audience’ groups can monitor language use and make corrections if necessary. This can also be done as a full-class exercise.

LISTENING

- 8 Before listening, explain that students are going to hear a summary of the play. They could guess who the sentences refer to from their understanding of Benedick and Beatrice’s characters in the reading text. Play the recording twice. The first time, encourage students to listen without taking notes. The second time, they complete the answers.

Answers

1 A 2 C 3 A 4 B 5 B

- 9 Students read through the questions. Encourage students to answer from memory. Play the recording again for students to complete their answers and to check.

Answers

1 In Hero’s house. 2 Because she isn’t interested in him and likes being independent. 3 soldier 4 Because he’s dramatic and exaggerates everything.

AUDIOSCRIPT

Beatrice is a young, unmarried girl and she lives in her cousin Hero’s house. She is clever and lively and makes fun of everything – especially Benedick. She might have been in love with Benedick in the past, but their relationship is now over. Beatrice says she doesn’t want to marry and even refuses a proposal of marriage from Don Pedro. He is a rich and powerful man, but Beatrice isn’t interested in him. She likes being independent and is determined to stay that way. Surprisingly, she is tricked into falling in love with Benedick by her friends. She believes them when they tell her that Benedick loves her. However, their relationship doesn’t last because they have a serious disagreement. When Claudio accuses her cousin Hero of being unfaithful to him, Beatrice tells Benedick to kill Claudio, but he refuses.

Benedick is a young soldier who had recently returned from fighting in a war. He is attracted to Beatrice and enjoys joking with her. There is a competition between them to say the cleverest things. He is very dramatic and often exaggerates, so it is difficult to understand his true feelings for Beatrice. At the beginning of the play, he is certain he will never marry, but by the end of the play he has fallen in love with Beatrice and is very happy when she agrees to marry him.



CRITICAL THINKING

Ask the students the question: *Why does Beatrice tell Benedick to kill Claudio?* Elicit that he lied about her cousin, Hero. Then ask them: *Was the lie a serious lie?* Elicit that Claudio said that Hero had been unfaithful

when she hadn’t. In Shakespeare’s time, a woman being unfaithful could have serious consequences.

WRITING: PLOT

- 10 Ask students to explain the meaning of the word *plot*. Ask them to explain what they think makes a good story. They could talk about realistic characters, varied descriptions, use of dialogue, a dramatic ending, etc. Read through the *Writing* skills box. Ask students to explain *setting* and *dilemma*. Brainstorm some ideas for the story and write useful vocabulary on the board. Students could plan their stories in pairs before writing. Students can write their story in class or for homework. Students then swap their stories with a partner. They read each other’s work and highlight any mistakes. They assess whether the student has completed the task fully and whether they have followed all of the points in the box. They should focus especially on the structure. They then return the story to the original student who looks at the comments and redrafts their work. Ask some students to read their stories out loud to the class.

THINK SHAKESPEARE’S ENGLISH

- 11 Explain that Shakespeare’s plays and poems had a huge influence on the English language. For example, ‘barefaced’ in the expression a ‘barefaced lie’ comes from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. It means a lie that is obviously not true. When we say ‘It’s all Greek to me’, we’re admitting that we don’t understand something. This expression comes from *Julius Caesar*. Examples of other words that students will know also have their origins in Shakespeare’s works, for example: ‘amazement’, ‘accommodation’ and ‘suspicious’. Students discuss the meanings of the quotations in pairs.

Suggested answers

A heart of gold, extremely kind and helpful; *All of a sudden*, suddenly; *Vanish into thin air*, disappear; *Too much of a good thing*, too much of something could be harmful; *Truth will out*, we’ll know what happened; *Neither here nor there*, it’s not important.

Additional reading or internet research topics

- Britain in the 16th Century
- Shakespeare plays
- *Much Ado About Nothing* themes
- The life of William Shakespeare