

★ 2012 ★
STUDY GUIDE



DEAR TEACHERS,

This study guide from the CSC archives was created by Kathleen Dorman, former CSC Director of Education, in compliance with 2012 Common Core Anchor Standards for English Language Arts as well as the NYC Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts; all activities align with at least one standard in each category. It's packed full of information about Shakespeare, his language, the play, and our 2012 young company production of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Feel free to photocopy pages for your students!

We've also included bonus lessons that correspond with each of our workshops. For more updates on CSC, we encourage you and your students to follow us on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook @classicstage

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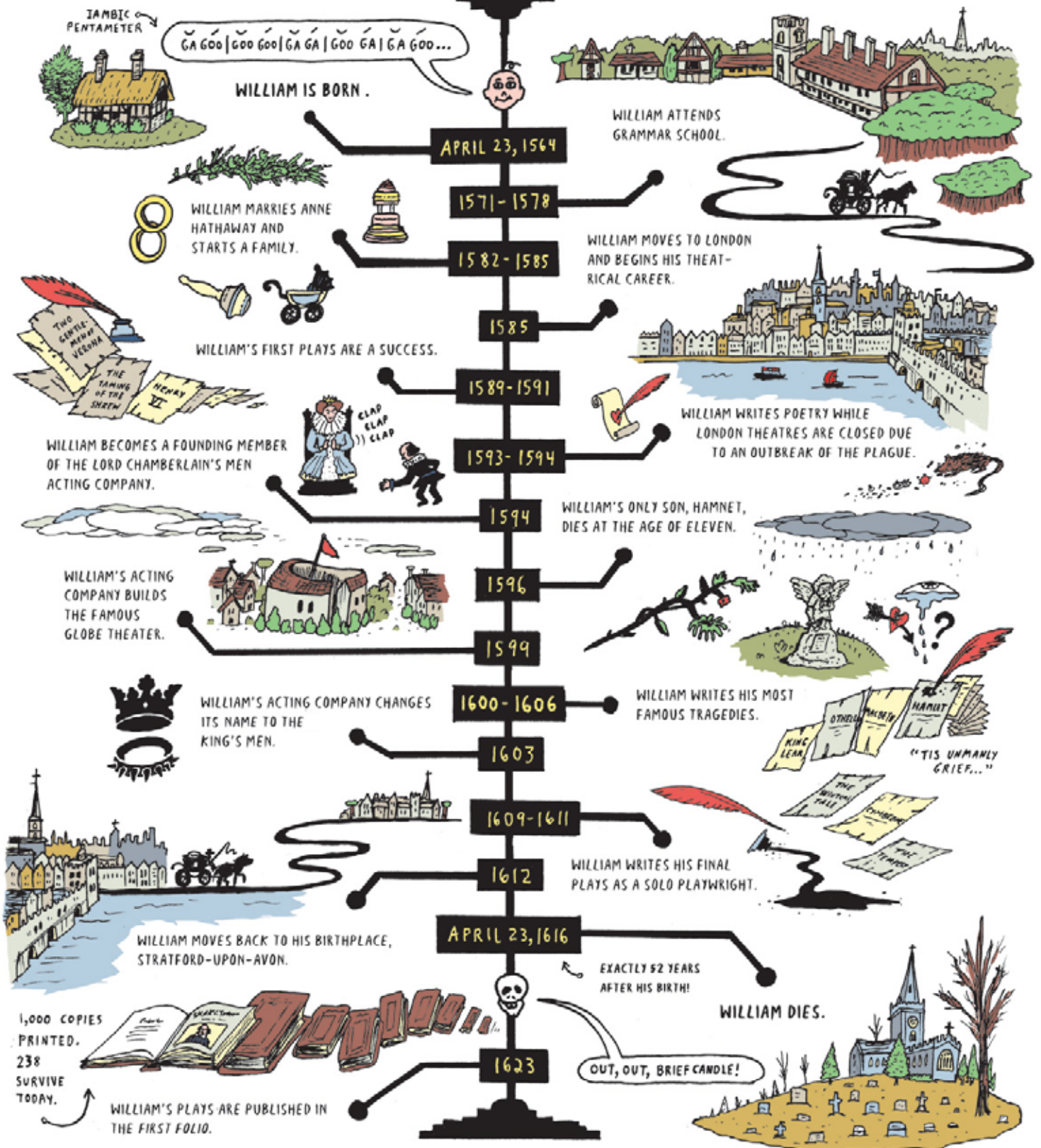
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PART ONE:
SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE AND THEATER

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE - AN ILLUSTRATED BIOGRAPHY

ILLUSTRATED BY DAVID HEATLEY



ELIZABETHAN ENGLAND

IN 16TH CENTURY ENGLAND,

religion and politics were one and the same. People believed in the “divine right of kings”—that is, monarchs were given their right to rule directly from God, and were subject to no earthly authority. In 1534, King Henry VIII famously broke from the Catholic Church when they denied him the right to a divorce from his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, who had not produced a male heir. He declared himself head of the new Anglican Church, which eventually became part of the Protestant Reformation. His actions resulted in a time of bitter and violent religious disputes in England, and the crown changed hands frequently in a short period of time.

BY THE TIME SHAKESPEARE WAS

BORN IN 1564, Queen Elizabeth—Henry VIII’s second eldest daughter, born to his second wife, Anne Boleyn—was in power. Her 44 years on the throne provided the kingdom with more stability than the previous short-lived reigns of her two half-siblings, Edward VI (crowned at age 9 and dead by age 16) and Mary Tudor (nicknamed “Bloody Mary” for the nearly 300 Protestants she had burned at the stake).

QUEEN ELIZABETH’S REIGN WAS A TIME OF THRIVING CULTURE.

English citizens loved her, nicknaming her “Good Queen Bess”. Because she remained unmarried throughout her rule and did not give birth to an heir, a distant relative, King James VI of Scotland, was named as her successor. Both Elizabeth and James were great patrons of the theater, and enjoyed Shakespeare’s plays. In fact, King James honored Shakespeare’s company of actors with the title of “The King’s Men”, and they performed at court regularly.



ELIZABETHAN TWITTER FEED

A CSC exclusive! We went back in time and got the scoop from the Royals themselves (plus Shakespeare, and his dad!) via Twitter.



King Henry VIII @VIIIKING · 1531

@CatAra you are outta here. This king needs a #maleheir. #kingsgreatmatter



Anne Boleyn @AnnieB · January 25, 1533

@CatAra check me out!!!. You better recognize, I AM THE NEW QUEEN! #cinderellastory



Catherine of Aragon @CatAra · December 1535

The #kingsgreatmatter is literally killing me. Missing my daughter @BloodyMary.



Edward VI @Eddie_the_KING · January 28, 1547

I’m the King of the world!!!! RIP, Dad @VIIIKING #kidsrule #9yearsold #winning



Mary Tudor @BloodyMary · July 19, 1553

Turn down 4 Protestantism. Turn up 4 Catholicism! This one’s for my mom, @CatAra, RIP. #sorrynotsorry



Queen Elizabeth @GoodQueenB · 1560

Philip II, Eric XIV of Sweden, Henry of Anjou...So many suitors. So little time. #singleNready2mingle (i/k I have work to do) #swiperight



John Shakespeare @Stratfor_Dad · April 26, 1564

Baptized my son William today @HolyTrinityChurch! #blessed



William Shakespeare @BillyShakes · 1589

Working on my 1st play! RT with title suggestions. It’s a comedy w/ a lot of errors.



Queen Elizabeth @GoodQueenB · April 23, 1597

Saw a HYSTERICAL play by @BillyShakes! Check out Merry Wives of Windsor! #LoveMeSomeFalstaff #ChamberlainsMen



King James I @Scotty · March 24, 1603

RIP @GoodQueenB, thanks 4 the throne! #transformationtuesday #JacobeanEra



King James I @Scotty · May 19, 1603

Congrats to my boy @BillyShakes and his players. #thekingsmen #royalpatent #Othello #MeasureForMeasure



Anne Hathaway @ShakesWife · April 23, 1616

RIP/Happy birthday @BillyShakes. Thanks 4 the bed. @HolyTrinityChurch



GROWING UP SHAKESPEARE:

Fun, Games, and School

BOYS AND GIRLS began “petty school” around the age of four in order to learn how to read. Girls left school at age six to be taught at home by their mothers, or, if they were rich, a private tutor. If boys belonged to a middle class or wealthy family, they could continue on to “grammar school” after leaving petty school, or they were sent to work in some sort of trade, such as farming. At grammar school boys would study Latin, drama, poetry, and history for long hours with no desks. Learning Latin was important for any boy wanting to enter a career in law, medicine, or the Church. Because Shakespeare’s father made a sustainable living in public and government jobs, Shakespeare was able to attend grammar school where he likely picked up his love of drama and writing.



FOOTBALL—or soccer, as we know it—was a popular sport for people in the countryside around Shakespeare’s hometown. The balls were made from inflated pigs’ bladders! **(LEFT)** Shakespeare makes mention of this sport in *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*: “Am I so round with you as you with me, that like a football you do spurn me thus?” Other popular sports of the day Shakespeare mentions in his works include tennis, bowling, wrestling, rugby, billiards, and archery.

FESTIVALS occurred at various times of the year. One of the most popular was on May 1st, May Day, the celebration of the arrival of summer! Columns were erected (maypoles) and adorned with ribbons and flowers, traditionally as part of a dance **(RIGHT)**. This tradition is reflected in *A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM*: “They rose early to observe the rite of May.”



RIGHT: Children learned to read using “hornbooks” like these – a piece of wood covered with printed-paper, protected by a transparent sheet of horn.



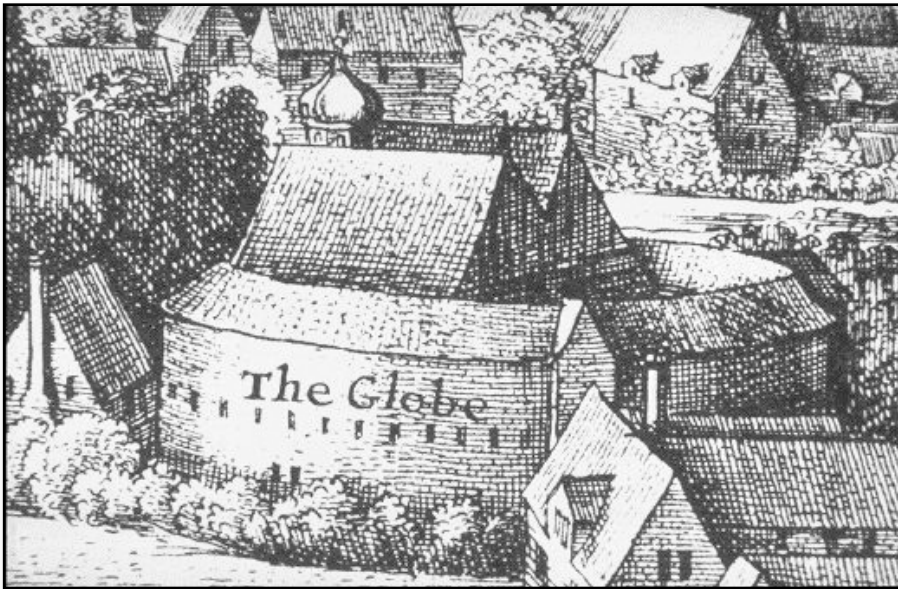
LONDON CITY LIVING:

Filth, Fashion, and Fighting

IF YOU LIVED IN LONDON during Shakespeare's time, you would have encountered overly crowded streets, heaps of trash on the sidewalk, and the heads of executed criminals placed on poles for all to see. But amidst the grime, there were also beautiful churches and large mansions filled with nobles and wealthy merchants. Most items you needed would have been purchased from street vendors, including vegetables, fruits, toys, books and clothing.



ABOVE: Like New York City today, space was tight. Many buildings were designed with vertical living in mind, as London quickly became the epicenter of culture in England.



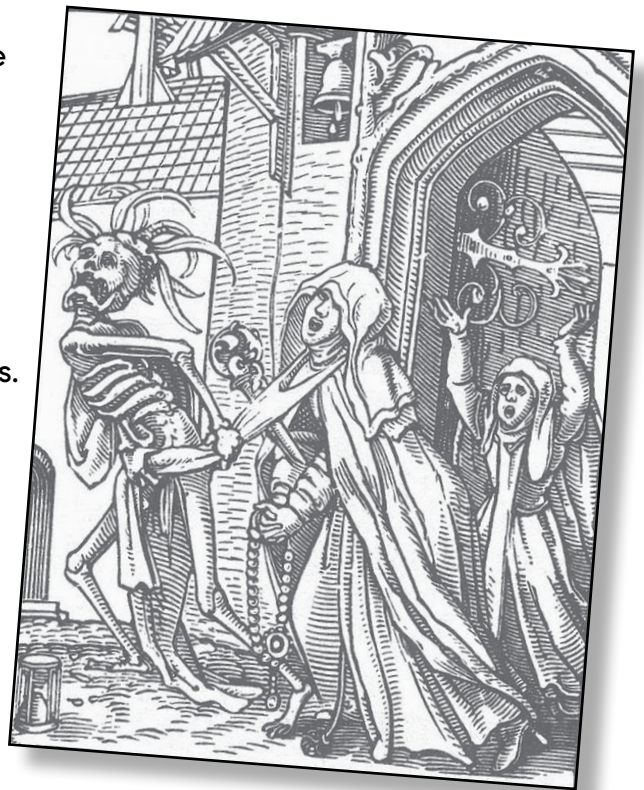
SHAKESPEARE MOVED TO LONDON to work in the theater. But theater wasn't the only cultural event happening in London. You could also view bloody tournaments between animals, and public executions! Gambling was also popular.

The first theater was built in 1576. Its shape, like The Globe (**ABOVE**), was influenced by bear fighting-rings (**RIGHT**), which were popular in London at the time. Shakespeare referenced this Elizabethan sport in Macbeth when Macbeth states, "They have tied me to a stake; I cannot fly, but bear-like I must fight the course."



OUTBREAKS OF THE PLAGUE were common in Elizabethan London. Many Londoners believed the plague was caused by the various smells throughout the city, so they carried containers filled with herbs to combat the stench. What they didn't know was that the plague was actually spread by fleas that lived on rats, which were rampant on the dirty streets.

In 1592, the plague forced London theaters to shut their doors for two whole years. 12,000 Londoners lost their lives. With no playhouses to produce his works, Shakespeare focused his attention on writing narrative poems and sonnets for wealthy patrons.



CLOTHING WAS A SIGN OF ONE'S RANK so there were strict rules dictating what citizens could and could not wear. Those dressing above their status could be arrested! Exceptions were made for actors as they often played nobles on stage.



ABOVE: As a rule, the less practical the outfit, the higher the rank of its wearer. Wealthy men often wore hats with ostrich feathers for decoration, and huge "ruff" collars. Wealthy women wore wide padded dresses with puffy sleeves.



RIGHT: The less wealthy wore practical clothing conducive to labor. While the wealthy were wearing luxurious fabrics such as silk and velvet, the lower-status citizens often wore rough wool.



THE COURT



ABOVE: The procession of Queen Elizabeth I. She is surrounded by her courtiers, ladies maids, and favored knights.

FOOLS AND JESTERS were a familiar sight at court. They traditionally wore motley, a colorful patchwork costume, and functioned like resident stand-up comedians or clowns. There were two types of fools: natural, and artificial. In Elizabethan England, mental and learning disabilities weren't understood, but those who had one of these disabilities could earn a living for themselves if they could make people laugh. Fools of this kind were called natural, meaning they were born "foolish." Artificial fools were deliberately foolish or eccentric for the purposes of entertainment, much like the comedians of today.

CHIVALRY, a code of ethics that glorified warfare and armed conflict as well as the pursuit of courtly ladies, was revered by Elizabethan society. They believed that honor was something you attained through physical prowess rather than moral integrity. Some of these values still exist in our culture today—superheroes are often heroic because they have incredible combat abilities. Legendary knights were the superheroes of the Renaissance!



ABOVE: A motley fool! Notice that this fool's motley costume has ass's ears attached, a common symbol of foolishness. He also carries a "ninny stick," a rod with a carved imitation of his own face at the end.

LEFT: One of the most important figures in the history of chivalry was Saint George who, according to legend, tamed and killed a dragon to save a damsel in distress and convert a city to Christianity.



WELCOME TO THE GLOBE THEATRE

LET ME TELL YOU A LITTLE ABOUT "THIS WOODEN O."

THE COMPANY WAS HAVING DIFFICULTY RENEWING THE LEASE ON OUR FIRST THEATER, SO IN 1599 WE TOOK IT DOWN AND MOVED ITS TIMBERS ACROSS THE THAMES RIVER TO THE BANKSIDE AND BUILT THE GLOBE.

THE BANKSIDE IS GREAT—IT'S JUST OUTSIDE THE JURISDICTION OF THE CITY OF LONDON, SO WE'RE SAFE FROM CITY OFFICIALS WHO THINK THAT THE THEATER IS IMMORAL AND WANT TO ABOLISH IT.

THE ORIGINAL GLOBE BURNED DOWN IN 1613 WHEN CANNON FIRE—PART OF A PERFORMANCE OF HENRY VIII—ACCIDENTALLY SET THE THATCHED ROOF AFLAME! OOPS!

WE BUILT A SECOND, MORE ELABORATE GLOBE ON THE SAME SITE, AND IT REMAINED IN USE UNTIL CIVIL WAR BROKE OUT IN ENGLAND IN 1642.

THE FLAG IS FLYING! THAT MEANS WE'VE GOT A PERFORMANCE TODAY.

MY TICKET COST TWICE AS MUCH AS WHAT THAT GENTLEMAN PAID FOR HIS CUSHIONED SEAT. I'M RIGHT ABOVE ALL THE ACTION! EVERYONE CAN SEE THAT I'M A VIP.

THE STAGE ROOF PROTECTS THE ACTORS FROM THE WEATHER, AND ALSO ACTS AS A SET PIECE WE CALL THE "HEAVENS." SEE THE STARRY SKY WE PAINTED?

THE BALCONY IS GREAT FOR WINDOW SCENES.

O ROMEO, ROMEO, WHEREFORE ART THOU ROMEO?

DID YOU KNOW JULIET WAS PLAYED BY A BOY? NO GIRLS ALLOWED!

THIS IS A "THRUST" STAGE, MEANING WE HAVE AUDIENCE MEMBERS ON THREE SIDES. JUST LIKE AT CSC!

THIS TRAP DOOR LEADS TO "HELL," THE SPACE BENEATH THE STAGE. IT MAKES A GREAT GRAVE, TOO!

ALAS, POOR YORICK. I KNEW HIM...

MY TICKET COST TWICE AS MUCH AS WHAT THOSE "GROUNDLINGS" PAID TO STAND IN THE YARD BELOW. AND FOR AN EXTRA PENCE, I GET TO SIT ON A CUSHION!

THE GLOBE CAN ACCOMMODATE NEARLY 3,000 AUDIENCE MEMBERS. CSC'S HOUSE ONLY SEATS ABOUT 200.

CHEAPEST SEAT IN THE HOUSE! WELL, IT'S NOT A SEAT, EXACTLY. AT LEAST I GET TO SEE THE SHOW!

THE "GROUNDLINGS" SOMETIMES THREW FRUIT AT THE ACTORS IF THEY DIDN'T LIKE A PERFORMANCE!

Joseph B. Redman

DAVID HEATEY





Much adoe about Nothing

*As it hath been sundrie times publikely
acted by, the right honourable, the Lord
Chamberlaine his seruants.*

Written by William. Shakespeare.



LONDON
Printed by V. S. for Andrew Wise, and
William Aspley.
1600.

**PART TWO:
THE PLAY**

PLOT SYNOPSIS FOR **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING** CARTOON BY DAVID HEATLEY

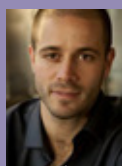




*prone to wild grammatical mistakes!



THE HOUSEHOLD



Leonato
I am respected, rich & noble.
DANIEL LEVITT



Hero
I am innocent, sweet & gentle.
JENSEN OLAYA



Beatrice
I am independent, sassy & witty.
ITO AGHAYERE

cousins



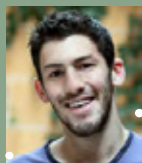
Ursula
I am a helpful, loyal servant.
DANIELLE FAITELSON



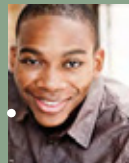
attendants

Margaret
I am a servant & a bawdy flirt.
NATALIA MIRANDA-GUZMÁN

THE OFFICERS



Don John
I am conniving, sullen & jealous.
DAVE KLASKO

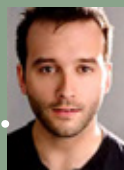


Don Pedro
I am noble, generous & powerful.
EDDIE RAY JACKSON

brothers & rivals

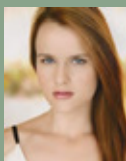


Claudio
I am shy, gullible & in love.
BLAZE MANCILLAS



Benedick
I am an aristocratic & witty bachelor.
MATTHEW MICHAEL HURLEY

friends



Connie
I am conniving, backstabbing & eccentric.
KATE FLANAGAN



Balthazar
I am musical, romantic & helpful.
DAN BIELINSKI

THE LAW



Dogberry
I am sincere, confused & serious.
DAN BIELINSKI

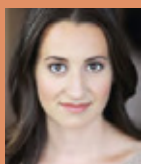


Seacoal
I am an honorable & law-abiding deputy.
DANIELLE FAITELSON

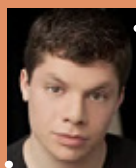


Verges
I am a loyal & honorable deputy.
NATALIA MIRANDA-GUZMÁN

THE LOCALS



Friar Francis
I am forgiving, goodly and benevolent.
SARAH EISMAN



Borachio
I am a sneaky, trouble-making ladies' man.
ADAM LUBITZ



NOTES ON THE PLAY: THE BATTLE OF THE SEXES

by Lezlie Cross, the Dramaturg for our 2012 production

In the first moments of *Much Ado About Nothing*, Leonato tells us that there “is a kind of merry war” between his niece Beatrice and a soldier named Benedick. He explains: “they never meet but there’s a skirmish of wit between them.” Beatrice and Benedick always fight, but not physically – the blows they exchange are verbal. Benedick says that Beatrice’s language is like a sword “and every word stabs.” Each wants to prove their cleverness, sarcasm, and wit to be deadlier than the other’s. In this play, the age-old battle of the sexes is played out on a battlefield where insults are the weapons and you never admit defeat.

The battle of the sexes is a common theme throughout the history of western culture.

It appears in several other Shakespearean plays, most notably in *The Taming of the Shrew*, where the battle becomes physical, mental, and emotional as Petruchio tries to “tame” his new wife Kate. Modern uses of the term include a board game that pits men against women and a Ludacris album where duets between male and female artists contrast the differing points of view held by men and women.

So, why does this battle continue to be fought?

In 1993 John Gray wrote a book called *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*. It was hugely popular. The premise of the book is that healthy heterosexual relationships can’t exist without recognizing that men and women are supposed to be dissimilar. But is that true for Beatrice and Benedick?

One of the challenges for Beatrice and Benedick is that they are too similar. They are both smart, sharp-tongued, stubborn individuals who claim that they don’t want to be married, and certainly not to each other. They try to make it appear as though they hate one another: Beatrice calls him “a court jester,” and Benedick says he would rather travel to far-off countries than talk to her. Yet it is clear that they are drawn to each other, and relish the verbal jousting.

They are so alike that when Don Pedro first suggests that they would make a good couple, Leonato protests: “if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.” However, their friends know that their similarities will make them a good match and conspire to make them fall for each other. Perhaps Cupid, the god of love, will be able to end their war.

But even when Benedick and Beatrice fall for the trick – and each other – they still can’t stop fighting their verbal battle. Perhaps they don’t want or need to stop. Verbal sparring is how they communicate. Benedick says to her: “thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.” They are smart enough to know that the spark in their relationship is witty conflict.

There are, of course, differences between men and women – there always will be. But what Benedick and Beatrice learn by the end of the play is that the things that unite them are much more powerful. Eventually, passionate kisses win over harsh words. The battle is finally over, and both sides are winners.



What is a Dramaturg?

Did you know that almost every production of Shakespeare modifies the play that we read in the classroom for performance? For example, to get our *Much Ado* down to an hour-and-a-half (we couldn't keep you out of school too much longer than that!), we cut several scenes, a lot of lines, and even a few characters! **A dramaturg on a Shakespeare production is someone who helps to make these kinds of decisions about cuts and changes to the play, and then helps the director and the actors to understand everything they are saying.** In general, a dramaturg can serve many different roles in the theater, from working with contemporary playwrights on new plays to giving feedback to a director about how a production could be stronger. **Dramaturgy requires a lot of research and becoming an expert on the play.** The dramaturg also makes sure the play stays true to the playwright's intentions.



QUIZ:

WHO ARE YOU IN *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*

1. As far as dating history goes...

- A: You've dated a bit but you never found the perfect match.
- B: You've never dated, but you totally believe in true love.
- C: You have no time or patience to deal with something as superficial as dating.
- D: You've definitely broken numerous hearts along the way.

2. Your perfect date would involve...

- A: Going to a movie; something where I don't have to talk too much.
- B: A romantic, candlelit dinner.
- C: Reading a great novel. ALONE.
- D: Going to an exclusive club with VIP access and lots of eye candy.

3. What one word would you use to describe yourself?

- A: Shy
- B: Loyal
- C: Spunky
- D: Heartbreaker

4. You see someone you are really into standing across the room. Do you...

- A: Ask a friend to speak on your behalf.
- B: Wait and see if they make the first move.
- C: Use reverse psychology by acting like you don't like them at all.
- D: Go directly to them and let them know your feelings.

5. Someone tells you that your girlfriend/boyfriend has cheated on you. Do you...

- A: Accuse her/him of being unfaithful in front of the entire school during homecoming.
- B: You know this couldn't be true so you give it no thought.
- C: Demand proof first, and then lay out the punishment accordingly.
- D: Get your revenge by cheating on them with their best friend.

6. Your two best friends are totally into each other but they won't admit it. Do you...

- A: Make them think the other is into them by circulating rumors for them to overhear.
- B: Quietly encourage them to spend some extra time together.
- C: They should just stay friends. Romance is totally over-rated.
- D: Whatever... if they can't admit it, then that's their problem!

7. You have been accused of doing something you did not do. Do you:

- A: Challenge the accuser to a fight.
- B: Wait it out... you trust that you will be found innocent eventually.
- C: This would never happen to you. You're way too smart to be involved in ridiculous accusations.
- D: Let's be honest... If you're being accused of something, it's probably true.

Your Results

If the majority of your answers are:

A: You are a Claudio. B: You are a Hero. C: You are a Beatrice. D: You are a Borachio.



TABLE WORK: UNPACKING SHAKESPEARE'S LANGUAGE

IS THIS REALLY WRITTEN IN ENGLISH? Yes, it is! But it's also poetry. Elizabethans used poetry for the same reason we still use it today: to express heightened states of emotion. So the language may be more densely packed with all those great rhetorical devices you learned in English class—metaphors, alliteration, irony—but it's definitely still English.

DID PEOPLE IN SHAKESPEARE'S DAY SPEAK IN VERSE? No, no more than we speak in rap today. But people both then and now enjoy the rhythm and rhyme of verse. It helps us tune in more immediately, more completely to the feelings and choices of the characters.

IS SHAKESPEARE HARDER FOR ACTORS TO PERFORM THAN REGULAR PLAYS? Actually, for most actors, Shakespeare is easier! The rhythm of the language makes it easy to memorize. (You know how song lyrics get stuck in your head, or how you can remember silly little rhymes from when you were a kid? It's like that.) And all those rhetorical devices act as clues to tell the actors how their character feels.

To find those clues, a company will begin their rehearsal process with table work.

Shakespeare invented many words and phrases that we use on a regular basis today. Below are some examples.



Verse or Prose?

Shakespeare employs several forms of language in his plays: prose, blank verse, and rhymed verse. Prose is what we think of as everyday speech, without specific rules or rhyme and rhythm. Verse, then, can be defined as giving order or form to the random stress pattern of prose. This repeating combination of stressed and unstressed syllables is known as a foot, which is the basic unit of verse. An iamb, or iambic foot, is a foot of poetry containing two syllables, with an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable: "ta DUM."

A quick way to tell verse from prose: lines of verse begin with capital letters, while prose will appear in paragraph form.

Blank Verse

Blank Verse is the standard poetic form Shakespeare uses in his plays. It can also be defined as unrhymed iambic pentameter—that is, a line of poetry containing five ("penta" meaning five) iambic feet, not rhyming with any adjacent line. That's ten syllables all together. The pattern flows easily for speakers of English, and the stresses match the human heart beat —

"ta DUM, ta DUM, ta DUM, ta DUM, ta DUM," or "i AM, i AM, i AM, i AM, i AM."

ta DUM, ta DUM, ta DUM, ta DUM, ta DUM

or, a good way to remember the word "iamb" is to think of it as:

i AM, i AM, i AM, i AM, i AM

If you say, "The Yankees and the Mets are famous teams." with natural inflection, you will have spoken a line of iambic pentameter.

The YANK | ees AND | the METS | are FA | mous TEAMS

Here are two more:

i TAKE | the SUB | way EV | ery DAY | to SCHOOL

i CAN'T | go OUT | be CAUSE | my HOME | work's LATE

Now say a line from Much Ado:

HERO

Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes.

dis DAIN | and SCORN | ride SPARK | ling IN | her EYES

Here's another one:

CLAUDIO

Behold how like a maid she blushes here!

Be HOLD | how LIKE | a MAID | she BLUSH | es HERE

A repeating combination of stressed and unstressed syllables is known as a foot, which is the basic unit of verse. An iamb is a foot of poetry containing two syllables, with an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable: ta DUM



Feminine Endings

Shakespeare does not relentlessly follow the rhythm in every line. He occasionally varies the stresses or uses a period in the middle of a line, which causes us to pause longer. Nor does every line contain exactly ten syllables. Some lines may contain an added syllable and others may drop a syllable. Shakespeare's most common variation in iambic pentameter is the use of the feminine ending — lines of text that add an unstressed eleventh syllable.

For example:

HERO

All matter else seems weak; she cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection.

all MAT | ter ELSE | seems WEAK | she CAN | not LOVE
nor TAKE | no SHAPE | nor PRO | ject OF | a FEECT | ion

Shared Lines & Split Lines

Shakespeare sometimes splits a line of verse, so that two characters share the ten syllables. This is called a shared line or a split line, and helps show quick thinking or strong emotion, as well as creating a sense of accelerated action.

Thus we have both the effect of poetry AND of natural speech.

Examine these two shared lines:

LEONATO

Sweet prince, why speak not you?

DON PEDRO

What should I speak?

They scan as:

sweet PRINCE | why SPEAK | not YOU? | what SHOULD | i SPEAK?

Prose

For the most part, Much Ado is written in prose.

Prose does not follow a rhyming scheme and is closer to everyday language used then and now. It is often assumed that Shakespeare wrote lower class characters in prose, but this is not true. Many characters go back and forth between verse and prose. For instance, one of prince Hamlet's speeches is written in prose. Since verse was the conventional writing method of Elizabethan England, Shakespeare was pushing the literary boundaries with his prose form. Actors pay attention to when characters speak in verse and when they speak in prose—Shakespeare made these choices on purpose, and it can tell the actor a lot about how their character thinks and feels.



Malapropism

Malapropism is the act of misusing or the habitual misuse of similar sounding words, especially with humorous results. Dogberry, the inept police officer, creates much of the comedy found in *Much Ado* through his frequent misuse of language (malaprops). In fact, people have coined "Dogberryism" as an alternate word for malapropism.

Here's one example of malapropism in his dialogue:

"Our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two auspicious persons..."

Dogberry is confusing the words comprehended with apprehended and auspicious with suspicious. Read the following sentences and see if you can find the malapropisms (the answers are at the bottom of the page):

1. "Get the learned writer to set down our excommunication, ..."
(Dogberry – III.v)
2. "...his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire ..."
(Dogberry – III.v)
3. "Is our whole dissembly appeared?"
(Dogberry – IV.ii)
4. "We are now to examination these men."
(Dogberry – III.v)
5. "If a merry meeting may be wished, God prohibit it!"
(Dogberry – V.i)
6. "O villain! Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this."
(Dogberry – IV.ii)
7. "By this time our sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter: ..."
(Dogberry – V.i)
8. "You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch."
(Dogberry – III.iii)
9. "Dost thou not suspect my place?"
(Dogberry – IV.ii)

Answers:

- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|------------|
| 1. examination or interrogation. | 2. sharp. | 3. assembly. | 4. examine. | 5. permit. |
| 6. damnation. | 7. informed. | 8. sensible. | 9. respect. | |



Q&A WITH MUCH ADO DIRECTOR JIMMY MAIZE

Tell us a bit about your approach to *Much Ado About Nothing*.

One of the primary themes in *Much Ado* is this notion of gossip and its function – both in society as well as the lives of the play's four lovers. Nearly every character in the play whispers, teases, talks behind either others' backs, and is only comfortable putting their true thoughts into letters or notes ('note-ing' being a play on words in the title). While gossip comes with a high degree of excitement and can reveal our true feelings—even to ourselves, in the case of Beatrice and Benedick – it can also cause harm and confusion and drive lovers apart—as in the case of Hero and Claudio. In either case, the need to gossip and talk about one another is a societal 'release-valve' and a way of negotiating pressures of every form: gender roles, class systems, etc. I have decided to set the play in a time of American tumult and change, where a young energy (and therefore gossip) was percolating in every corner – the onset of the roaring twenties. The men are returning home from a world war to find women more empowered, a status quo of race and class systems being challenged, and every bit of nervous energy being put into a new form of music – jazz.



Why does it remain a relevant story more than four hundred years after Shakespeare wrote it?

We have and always will fall in love, gossip, hide our true feelings from ourselves and others, and need to be confronted with the threat of losing it all before we snap into action.

What is your favorite moment in the play?

There is a blues song and dance at the beginning of the show, where we glimpse Beatrice's world just before the men return from World War I. It is a moment filled with the energy and freedom of this changing time, but when the men abruptly enter in full uniform, you feel an immediate tension that sets the tone for the entire play. I also love the last scene – the double-wedding. It's both a moment of complete humility for Beatrice and Benedick, but also a time for them to join with the entire company in one final celebration.

What is the most challenging aspect of working on this play?

One of the challenging aspects of this play is telling the story of Claudio's redemption (for falsely accusing Hero) and then Hero's 'reincarnation.' It happens so fast in the play, and is a foreign concept to modern audiences, but the story must be clear that Claudio grieves so deeply for the loss of Hero, earns a pardon from Leonato in the form of his veiled niece (Hero in disguise), and Hero is then 'cleansed' from false accusation as a newly-minted maiden.

What character(s) in the play do you most resemble and why?

I tend to overthink matters of love much like Benedick does. But I also have a mustache very similar to Dogberry. So it's a toss-up.



Q&A WITH MAAN COSTUME DESIGNER OANA BOTEZ-BAN

Tell us a little bit about your design concept for *Much Ado*.

Jimmy, our director, came up with the idea that he wants the story to happen in New Orleans, circa 1920. Most of the time we see the characters in a club. It's all about that world: the music, the dancing, the men in military uniforms and the citizens of New Orleans. Ultimately the costumes reflect the way people celebrated life post World War I. It's not so much style, as it is a certain reality and specificity of this world.

Is there anything in particular about New Orleans that made it seem like the right place to set this play?

It's interesting. I remember my visits to New Orleans. It's such a dynamic city. I think maybe it has more of an internal, almost performative daily kind of life than New York City even. In New York you go to the theatre, in New Orleans you go in the streets and people are performing right there. Music is such a part of the culture. It's a party town and people celebrate life as such. That's the direction we're trying to go in with *Much Ado*.

Tell us a little about the major difference between Shakespeare's "original" *Much Ado* script and the Young Company "updated" version. What's unique about this production and how does it differ from a more traditional approach?

With Shakespeare—and I guess you could say with all classics—you're dealing with a language that's not naturally your own. It's heightened. And in order for it to be accessible to a younger audience, we have to "translate" (or update) it somehow, otherwise it becomes a museum piece. Our behavior, language, and even our bodies are very different today than they were back in Shakespeare's day. People were smaller back then! Every era has a unique body that supports the structure of its particular time. So how do we translate the play so a 21st century audience can relate? It's a matter of taste. I find that fun and challenging. My goal as a designer is to not underestimate how much an audience translates for themselves—especially a young audience. Because I find that they naturally relate to Shakespeare. His language may be different than ours today, but it's still rooted in English. Even more importantly, his stories and characters are universal.

What is the most fun thing about designing costumes for *Much Ado*?

That everyone gets to look fabulous and wear fabulous clothes from evening gowns to club outfits. I always find it fun to create such garments, especially for women.



If you could be any character in *Much Ado*, who would you be?

Beatrice! Because I really think she's solid. She doesn't give in easily. She knows who she is and she knows what she wants and she holds out for it and gets it in the end. She owns her life. Nobody owns it for her. That's how I try to live my life.



WHAT TO WATCH FOR...

QUESTIONS AND THEMES TO CONSIDER

BATTLE OF THE SEXES – See our essay on page 15.

Why do you think Beatrice and Benedick sling insults at each other yet fall in love by the end of the play?

How might these insults be flirting in disguise?

Why are Beatrice and Benedick so resistant to the idea of love?

Can you think of any modern films or television shows that portray characters insulting each other and then becoming romantically involved?

JEALOUSY

How does jealousy affect the actions of the characters? How does jealousy control Don John? Does jealousy play into Claudio's cruel treatment of Hero on their wedding day?

ABOUT NOTHING

In Shakespeare's day, the word Nothing would be pronounced as Noting (Observing). Because of this, the title carries a double meaning.

How do both meanings of the word display themselves in the play? What do the characters observe that causes such upheaval?

Can you think of an example from your life where you thought you observed something that ultimately was not what you thought you saw?

Have you ever made a decision based on wrong information? How did you resolve the situation?

WITTY LANGUAGE

The characters in *Much Ado* use witty language, with brilliant insults and hilarious wordplay.

- **INSULTS:** Beatrice and Benedick are two examples of the sharp tongues found in the characters of this play. What do the characters' use of language say about their personalities?
- **MALAPROPISMS:** Malapropisms are incorrect uses of words. Dogberry is infamous for his rampant use of malapropisms. Listen to his lines carefully and try to distinguish when he's using the wrong word!

DIRECTOR'S VIEWPOINT

While the basic text of a play does not change, each production of the play will be different because the director of each production will choose to emphasize different questions or themes that arise in the play. This is sometimes referred to as the director's viewpoint because the director focuses on telling the story of the play from their chosen angle. If you were a director planning to take on *Much Ado*, how might you answer the following questions? Your answers may lead you to discover what you think are the most important questions that the story contains, and which, therefore, you would want to make sure the audience experiences.

- *Much Ado About Nothing* is the story of _____.
(Example: *Much Ado About Nothing* is a story of deception, true love, courtship & misunderstandings.)
- If you were to have the audience remember one line from the production, what would it be?

For more ideas on what to watch for, see **NOTES ON THE PLAY** on page 15.



PART FOUR: ACTIVITIES

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS: LEARNING STANDARDS

& www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R

1. Theater Making: Acting, Playwriting/Play Making, Design and Technical Theater, and Directing. Students learn to use their minds, bodies, voices and emotions to examine the world and its meaning.
2. Developing Theater Literacy: Students explore theater history, use theater vocabulary, and develop critical, analytical and writing skills through observing, discussing and responding to live theater and dramatic literature.
3. Making Connections: Students make connections to theater by developing an understanding of self. They respond to theater by identifying personal issues, and apply learning in other disciplines to their inclusive understanding of theater.
4. Working with Community and Cultural Resources: Community resources that support Theater Making, theater literacy, theater connections and career exploration expand students' opportunities for learning.
5. Exploring Careers and Life Long Learning: Students develop audience skills and a connection to theater that allows them to value theater throughout their lives. They explore the scope and variety of theater careers.

Comprehension and Collaboration (Strands 1–3)



ACTIVITIES

AFTER WORKSHOP 1: Celebrity Casting

Based on what your students know about the characters in *Much Ado About Nothing* from the story WOOSH, have your class choose their own celebrity cast (actors, singers, politicians, television stars, etc.) for the play. Put up a list of all the characters and/or hand out lists to the class:

- LEONATO
- HERO
- BEATRICE
- DON PEDRO
- CLAUDIO
- BENEDICK
- DON JOHN
- MARGARET
- BORACHIO
- DOGBERRY
- FRIAR FRANCIS

Go through the characters one at a time and talk about who they are and what celebrity could be cast as that character.

Example: Beatrice is opinionated and smart, and she also has a romantic side that she rarely shows. Emma Stone could be a good Beatrice, since she is both the girl next door and has an edge.

Blueprint Strand 3: Making Connections

Common Core Strands: R.1 & W.9 (have your students cite specific passages from the play to support their choices); SL.1 (have your students work in pairs or small groups); SL.4 (have students present their casting choices to the class – you can even do this in roll, as a casting director making a pitch to the artistic director!)

AFTER WORKSHOP 2: “Shakespeare” It!

Today your students worked on paraphrasing Shakespeare into modern speech. Altering Shakespeare’s words – the very thing that makes Shakespeare “Shakespeare” – may have felt irreverent, but the truth is: Shakespeare LOVED word-play, inventing new words, and paraphrasing well-known stories into his own works!

Shakespeare hyphenated words, added prefixes (un-, be-, en-, de-, dis-), turned adjectives into verbs, and made up new words entirely. Come up with your own list of words with the class. (Example: unstaple, belight, ensleep, destart, dismark)

When you have a variety of examples, have your students step into role as Shakespeare writing his next play. Give them ten minutes to write the first few lines of the play. (Example: I belit the room to unstaple my paper – he was ensleep’d and I woke him up...)

Then have a few volunteers read their scenes aloud. Students must cast their play within the company (the class) and do a reading of the scene.

Blueprint Strand 1: Theater Making: Playwriting

Common Core Strands: R.4 (pair and share: have students evaluate each other’s work); W.3, W.4, W.5 (particularly if you have time to make this assignment into a longer story/scene); SL.4 & SL.6 (have the class listen to and evaluate the structure and clarity of the story/scenes); L.1 & L.2 (a strong command on language structure will provide context clues for the newly invented words; understanding of prefixes and suffixes also important!); L.4, L.5, L.6 (more pair and share evaluation)



AFTER WORKSHOP 3: Collage Sonnets

Today your class learned about sonnet structure; they also created a collage (a “mood board”) to get a visual idea of the play, and compiled a list of ideas/themes/elements from that collage. Ask students to choose five-ten words from the list and use them to write a sonnet of their own, in small groups or as a class.

Remind them that a sonnet must have:

- 14 lines
- ABAB CDCD EFEF GG rhyme scheme
- 5 iambs (unstressed STRESSED) for a total of 10 syllables in each line

Blueprint Strand 2: Developing Theater Literacy

Common Core Strands: R.9 (compare the sonnets written by students to Shakespeare’s *JULIUS CAESAR* – how did these different authors explore similar themes?); W.5 (particularly if you have time to revisit/edit); SL.2 (reference the “mood board”); SL.3 (pair and share: have students evaluate each other’s work); SL.5 (again, if you revisit this/turn it into a larger project); L.1, L.2, L.3 (the sonnet as a poetic form; knowing the rules of the English language and when/how to break them for effect in poetry)

AFTER WORKSHOP 4: Role on the Wall

Your students are rehearsing their scenes now – this activity will help them develop their characters!

Split students into groups based on the role they are playing (all the Beatrices together, all the Benedicks together, etc.). Pass out giant pieces of paper and have one student in the group lay on the paper while another traces his or her outline.

Ask the groups to write things that their character thinks/feels/says about himself or herself on the INSIDE of the outline; they should write things other characters think/feel/say about their character on the OUTSIDE. Encourage groups to search through the text of *Much Ado About Nothing* for actual quotes!

When groups are finished brainstorming, hang your “role on the wall” and whip around to each group to allow them to share their findings. What did they learn about their character? How will they incorporate this knowledge into their scene presentations?

Blueprint Strand 2: Developing Theater Literacy

Common Core Strands: R.1 (pulling specific quotes from the text); R.2 & R.3 (look at the relationship between two or more characters and the themes that emerge); R.4, R.5, R.6 (for a broader look at the play that can begin with this activity; potential reflection questions/essay topics to approach through the lens of this activity); W.9 (again with specific quotes); SL.1 (if working in groups or pair/share); SL.3 (determine context and a character’s tone before citing evidence); SL.4 (present to class); L.3, L.4, L.5 (when searching the text for evidence)



AFTER WORKSHOP 5: Compared to Whom?

Your students just performed their scenes for one another – BRAVO! Now take advantage of their knowledge of the characters in the play to analyze relationships and status – things to look for when you come to CSC to see *Much Ado About Nothing*!

Print out pieces of paper with character names on them or have students make the papers.

- LEONATO
- HERO
- BEATRICE
- DON PEDRO
- CLAUDIO
- BENEDICK
- DON JOHN
- MARGARET
- BORACHIO
- DOGBERRY
- FRIAR FRANCIS

Pass out the names to eleven students. Have them arrange themselves (in character) in order from youngest character to oldest; who knows the most about what's going on in the play to who knows the least; highest status to lowest status; most honest to least honest; most friendly to least friendly, etc. Encourage discussion: does the class agree with the placement? If not, why not? You can alternate the participating group of students, and take category suggestions from the class.

Blueprint Strand 3: Making Connections

Common Core Strands: R.3 (how individuals interact); R.6 (points of view); W.1 (have students write about the experience afterwards); W.9 (use quotes from the text to support choices the class made); SL.1 & SL.3 (discuss as a class)



FUN & GAMES

Character Word Search

Find the following words hidden in the puzzle below:

- BEATRICE
- BENEDICK
- BORACHIO
- CLAUDIO
- DOGBERRY
- DON JOHN
- HERO
- LEONATO
- MARGARET
- DON PEDRO

B	P	A	Y	B	U	F	H	L	Q	Y	N	S	F	G
P	U	J	B	T	U	F	D	U	L	B	B	J	E	T
K	D	W	D	P	R	V	C	K	E	E	O	L	C	W
R	C	O	C	I	X	Y	B	G	O	A	R	T	H	B
F	K	C	N	R	Y	E	Q	T	N	T	D	N	R	K
G	K	F	O	J	N	R	E	X	A	R	E	U	O	K
A	M	E	F	E	O	R	R	M	T	I	P	K	R	E
K	M	F	D	P	A	H	K	E	O	C	N	F	K	H
L	Z	I	E	G	I	F	N	K	B	E	O	E	E	Y
U	C	L	R	A	S	V	S	G	F	G	D	R	F	C
K	N	A	C	L	A	U	D	I	O	K	O	X	L	Q
Y	M	U	L	R	R	D	A	J	N	Z	P	D	S	O
X	X	W	I	O	I	H	C	A	R	O	B	E	V	J
K	U	T	I	F	F	Z	J	F	A	I	H	C	Y	D
F	K	D	P	C	J	R	Z	H	A	I	N	L	L	P



DOGBERRY'S MALAPROPISM WORD SEARCH

Find the following hidden words in the puzzle above, then pair the words Dogberry mixed up.

- APPREHENDED
- ASSEMBLY
- AUSPICIOUS
- BLUNT
- COMPREHENDED
- DAMNATION
- DISSEMBLY
- EXAMINATION
- EXAMINE
- EXCOMMUNICATION
- INFORMED
- PERMIT
- PROHIBIT
- REDEMPTION
- REFORMED
- RESPECT
- SENSELESS
- SENSIBLE
- SHARP
- SUSPECT
- SUSPICIOUS

Y A E N J A T P N O R J E C N
 L W P J O C S O R E I I N O E
 B E O P E I I S F A R V I P E
 M I L P R T T O E A H T M R X
 E R S B A E R P U M A S A O A
 S U E N I M H S M C B P X H M
 S P M S E S P E I E E L E I I
 I A H D P I N N N R D D Y B N
 D H F I C E U E M D S E S I A
 Y J Z I Y M C I S H E J R T T
 C J O T M D T T U V H D X F I
 L U C O M P R E H E N D E D O
 S F C S U O I C I P S U S K N
 N X D E M R O F N I T N U L B
 E O V R I E S E N S E L E S S



MUCH ADO MAD LIBS

Many of Shakespeare's plays were based on existing stories that he told in a new way. Here's your chance to create your own version of Benedick's speech about Beatrice.

Do this together as a class, or split into four groups. One person in each group is the "scribe" who asks the others for the parts of speech and fills them in the blanks. Group 1 will fill in the words for 1-4, Group 2: 5-9, Group 3: 10-14, and Group 4: 15-19. Complete the mad libs separately and then do a group reading of the speech.

This can be no (1) _____ the conference was
noun

(2) _____ borne. They have the truth of this from Hero.
adverb (emotion)

Love me! Why, it must be requited. I hear how I am (3) _____:
verb (past tense)

they say I will bear myself proudly if I perceive the love come from her; they say

too that she will rather die than (4) _____ any sign of
verb

affection. I did never think to (5) _____: I must not seem
verb

(6) _____: happy are they that hear their detractions and
adjective

can put them to mending. They say the lady is (7) _____;
adjective

'tis a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and

(8) _____, but for loving me; by my troth, it is no addition
adjective



to her (9) _____, nor no great argument of her folly
noun

for I will be (10) _____ in love with her. I may chance
adverb

have some (11) _____ quirks and remnants of
adjective

(12) _____ broken on me, because I have
noun

(13) _____ so long against marriage: but doth not
verb (past tense)

the appetite alter? A man loves the (14) _____ in his
noun (food)

youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper

bullets of the (15) _____ awe a man from the career
noun (part of the body)

of his humor. No, the (16) _____ must be peopled.
noun

When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were

(17) _____. Here comes Beatrice. By this day!
adjective

She's a (18) _____ lady. I do spy some
adjective



PART FIVE: SOURCES

SOURCES

TEACHING SHAKESPEARE

by Rex Gibson

Shakespeare for Dummies

by John Doyle (CSC Artistic Director) and Ray Lischner

The Friendly Shakespeare

by Norrie Epstein

The Genius of Shakespeare

by Jonathan Bate

Brush Up Your Shakespeare!

by Michael Macrone

Essential Shakespeare Handbook

by Leslie Dunton-Downer and Alan Riding

William Shakespeare and The Globe

written and illustrated by Alik

Eye Witness Shakespeare

written by Peter Chrisp, photographed by Steve Teague

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Classic Stage Company (CSC) is the award-winning Off-Broadway theater committed to re-imagining the classical repertory for contemporary audiences. Founded in 1967, CSC uses works of the past as a way to engage in the issues of today. Highly respected and widely regarded as a major force in American theater, it has become the home to New York's finest established and emerging artists, the place where they gather to grapple with the great works of the world's repertory.



The National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest presents *Shakespeare in American Communities*. CSC is one of 40 professional theater companies selected to participate in bringing the finest productions of Shakespeare to middle- and high-school students in communities across the United States. This is the twelfth year of this national program, the largest tour of Shakespeare in American history.



Council on
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