

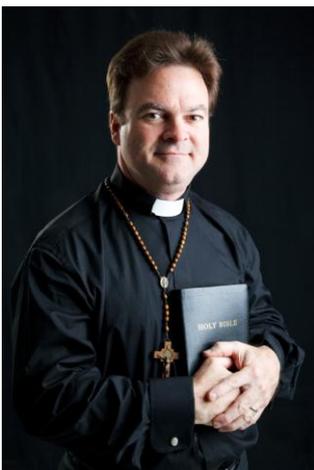
Warmer – disguise and deception

a. *With a partner, think of three different reasons why someone might wear a disguise.*



b. *You are going to read a text about the words in the box and the things in the pictures below. Work in pairs to discuss what you think the text will be about.*

trunk	priest	rosary beads	in secret	pedlar
punishable by death		entertaining	Shakespeare	Catholic mass



Task 1 – Who was the owner of the trunk?

You are going to read a news article about an old trunk with an interesting story.

Read paragraph 1, and see if your guesses about the story were right.

Disguise and deception in Shakespeare's England*[paragraph 1]* **Secrets of the pedlar's trunk**

A 17th-century trunk, discovered hidden behind a wall in a Lancashire house, can reveal a lot about what it was like to live in Shakespeare's England. The trunk looks like something a travelling salesman or 'pedlar' would have carried. Inside are fabrics, beads and a drinking cup. They seem to be ordinary items for sale. This trunk, however, contains a secret. It was used to hide the identity of its owner who, if discovered, could be sentenced to death. Its owner was not a pedlar but a Catholic priest in disguise.

Work in pairs to answer the questions.

1. What did the following people do?
 - a. pedlar
 - b. priest

2. Who was the owner of the trunk? Circle the correct answer.
 - a. pedlar
 - b. priest

Task 2 – Reading for gist

Now read the whole text. Write the correct heading for paragraphs 2–5. The first paragraph has been done for you.

- a. **The perfect disguise**
- b. **Shakespeare's secret**
- c. **Disguise on the stage**
- d. **A divided country**
- e. ~~**Secrets of the pedlar's trunk**~~

Disguise and deception in Shakespeare's England

[paragraph 1] Secrets of the pedlar's trunk

A 17th-century trunk, discovered hidden behind a wall in a Lancashire house, can reveal a lot about what it was like to live in Shakespeare's England. The trunk looks like something a travelling salesman or 'pedlar' would have carried. Inside are fabrics, beads and a drinking cup. They seem to be ordinary items for sale. This trunk, however, contains a secret. It was used to hide the identity of its owner who, if discovered, could be sentenced to death. Its owner was not a pedlar but a Catholic priest in disguise.



[paragraph 2] _____

Shakespeare lived at a time of religious unrest. As a result, everyone was watched and it was hard to know who to trust. At that time in Europe there were two main ideas of how the Christian faith should be expressed. These were practised by the Catholic and Protestant Churches. England had gone through a period of religious change during the reign of Henry VIII – Elizabeth I's father. England had been a Catholic country until Henry wanted to divorce his wife, which the Catholic Church would not allow. The Protestant Church, however, would allow the divorce, so Henry decided that England would become a Protestant country. As a result, being a Catholic was now illegal and punishable by death. However, many English people were still Catholic. These people were forced to hide evidence of their religious faith (such as rosary beads used for prayer) in order to stay alive. People in Shakespeare's home town of Stratford, for example, had to paint over the Catholic murals in their local church.



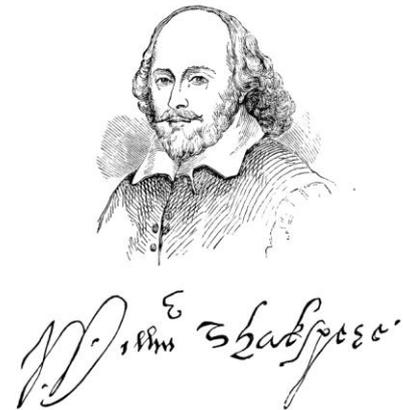
[paragraph 3] _____

It was a dangerous time to be a Catholic in England. If you wanted to practise your religion, you had to hide it. This is where the Lancashire pedlar's trunk becomes important. Although most people lived in towns or villages, it was unusual for these small places to have a village shop. Pedlars would travel from place to place selling items that you couldn't get in the countryside. The contents of the trunk, which at first seem to be an ordinary collection of goods for sale, are important items needed for a Catholic mass. It was illegal to perform the mass. Priests used this disguise as a way of travelling around to perform the mass for secret Catholics. The fabrics in the trunk were clothes to be worn by the priest. The drinking cup was a special cup for wine, used to represent the blood of Christ in the mass ceremony. The beads were rosary beads, used for prayer.



[paragraph 4] _____

Nothing is known of Shakespeare between the years 1585–1592, commonly called 'the lost years'. Some Shakespearean biographers think that Shakespeare's family were Catholics who practised their religion in secret. They suggest that during this time William Shakespeare might have gone into hiding at the home of the De Houghton family, disguised under the name of 'William Shakeshaft'.



[paragraph 5] _____

Disguise was also used in 16th- and 17th-century drama. This was partly for practical reasons. Women weren't allowed to act so men and boys had to disguise themselves as women. In Shakespeare's plays, disguise is used by characters to deceive others. Sometimes disguise can make the audience laugh, help characters fall in love or help resolve a plot. In *Measure for Measure*, a young woman called Portia disguises herself as a male lawyer to save innocent Antonio's life. At other times, disguise leads characters to fall in love with or even to kill the wrong person. In *Twelfth Night*, Viola dresses up as a boy and is mistaken for her twin brother, which results in everyone falling in love with the wrong person. Although disguise can make the plots of Shakespeare's plays quite complicated, it is also part of what makes them so entertaining.



Task 3 – Vocabulary

Work in pairs. Find the following words in the text and match them to definitions **a-i** below.

[paragraph 1]	1. hidden	a. the events that form the story of a novel, play or film
	2. illegal	b. a Catholic religious ceremony
[paragraph 2]	3. unrest	c. plays
	4. murals	d. not allowed by the law
[paragraph 3]	5. mass	e. when something or somebody is kept in a place where it/they cannot be seen or found
	6. biographers	f. people who write the story of another person's life
[paragraph 4]	7. drama	g. a political situation in which people are angry and likely to protest or fight
	8. resolve	h. large paintings on the wall of a building
	9. plot	i. find a solution to a problem or difficulty

Task 4 – Reading for detail

Read the text again and answer the questions.

1. What were the two main Christian Churches in Europe in the 17th century?
2. Why did King Henry VIII decide to change the way that England practised Christianity?
3. Why did Catholic people in England have to hide their religious faith?
4. What was a pedlar's job? Explain in your own words.
5. What were the following items used for? **a.** fabric **b.** drinking cup **c.** beads
6. What do some scholars claim happened to Shakespeare between the years 1585 and 1592? Explain in your own words.
7. Who took the roles of women in plays in the 16th and 17th centuries? Why?
8. Name three effects of disguise in Shakespeare's plays.

Task 5 – Jigsaw activity: disguise in two Shakespeare plays

Work in groups to put the summaries of *Much Ado About Nothing* and *As You Like It* in the correct order.