

Shakespeare – Much Ado About Nothing

Topic

Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing*

Aims

- Learners will practise speaking skills and giving opinions
- Learners will practise listening skills
- Learners will review question forms
- Learners will practise writing skills

Age group

Teens

Level

B1–B2

Time

45 minutes or three shorter sections

Materials

- Video from LearnEnglish Teens <http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/literature-uk/shakespeare-much-ado-about-nothing>
- Much Ado About Nothing student worksheet

Introduction

In this lesson, learners will discuss marriage and its role in their society, watch a video about the Shakespeare play *Much Ado About Nothing*, and discuss some of the play's main themes. Learners will also imagine that they have the opportunity to interview one of the main characters about their actions and attitudes in the play. There are also suggestions for additional/alternative follow-up activities.

Procedure

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| 1. | • Write the word 'Marriage' on the board and give students two minutes to write a definition in |
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Introduction to one of the play's themes (5–10 minutes)	<p>pairs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the following questions on the board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Do many people get married where you live these days? ◦ What age do people normally get married in your country? Do you think this is a good age? ◦ What are the main reasons that people get married? ◦ Can people be married and still be independent? Why (not)? • Give students 5–10 minutes to discuss the questions in pairs or small groups and then get some feedback.
2. Preparation activity (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write 'Much Ado About Nothing' on the board and tell students it is the name of a Shakespeare play. Marriage is an important theme in this play. Ask students if they know what this phrase means. If they need help, you could give them three options – e.g. a) when you have lots to do and no time to do it, b) a lot of excitement and activity about something that is not very important, or c) a big group of people doing nothing. (The answer is b!) • Do the preparation activity from the LearnEnglish Teens website. It can be found here: http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/uk-now/literature-uk/shakespeare-much-ado-about-nothing and is the first task under 'Preparation'. This can be done by projecting the page, or by printing off the worksheet here: http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/sites/teens/files/much_ado_about_nothing_-_exercises_0.pdf. • Alternative: Divide up the words and definitions and put the definitions on one colour card and the words on a different colour card. Ask students to find their partner. Check the answers when students have matched themselves, and check pronunciation.
3. Watch the video (10–15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students watch the video, and then they can do the 'Check your understanding' activities from the LearnEnglish Teens site. Ask students to do the true or false activity and check answers – this can be projected, or students can work from the worksheet: http://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/sites/teens/files/much_ado_about_nothing_-_exercises_0.pdf. As an alternative, you could read out the True/False statements (like a quiz) and ask students to write the answers in teams. • Ask the students to do the 'Check your understanding' multiple choice activity and again, check answers. • Ask students who plays tricks in the play. Ask them to make a list in pairs. (A man tricks Claudio into thinking that Hero has been with another man, Hero and Claudio trick Benedick and Beatrice into thinking that they love each other. Claudio is tricked into thinking that Hero is dead, and that he is marrying Hero's relative when, in fact, it is her.) Check answers and ask students if they think these tricks are funny/acceptable. Would your students play similar tricks on their friends?
4. Follow-up: interview with one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Much Ado About Nothing</i> was written in 1598. Ask students if they think a story like this could happen today. Why or why not? How might the attitudes to marriage be different? Would people play these kinds of tricks and how might people react? Do students think the characters will stay together? Why? Why not?

of the main character s (10–15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to imagine that one of the characters (Hero, Claudio, Beatrice or Benedick) has travelled through time and has arrived in the present. Students will have the opportunity to interview them to find out more about their actions and attitudes in the play, and perhaps what happened afterwards. • Students work in pairs. Give them the worksheet, and ask them to look at the questions. Ask them to work through the question on the worksheet and make some notes before writing their interview questions. Encourage students to think of interesting questions. They should write the name of the character that the questions are for on the sheet. • Monitor and help students with question forms if they need it. • When students have written their interview questions, you can ask them to swap with another pair. This pair should now put themselves in the shoes of the character and write notes about how they think the character might answer the questions. Set a time limit (5 minutes) for this. Encourage students to really put themselves in the character's shoes here and use their imagination. • Now put the interviewers and the interviewees into new pairs to conduct their interviews. The interviewees can use their notes to help answer the questions. Encourage the interviewers to ask follow-up questions. • You could ask some groups to act out their interviews to the class. You might even decide to record or video the interviews for students to listen to/watch afterwards.
5. Optional follow-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you would like to do more work with your learners on Shakespeare, go here: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/sites/teacheng/files/Teens%20Shakespeare%20Extension%20Activities.pdf for a series of additional/alternative follow-up exercises.

Contributed by

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