Much Ado About Nothing

Topic

The Shakespeare play *Much Ado About Nothing*, ideas from the play, deception and friendship

Aims

- Learners will develop strategies for watching and understanding a short video based on the Shakespeare play *Much Ado About Nothing*.
- Learners will develop comprehension and speaking skills by discussing ideas from the play.
- Learners will develop speaking and writing skills through personalised speaking and writing activities based on an element from the play.

Age

Older primary (9–11 years)

Time

1 x 45-minute lesson or three shorter segments

Materials

Much Ado About Nothing video, worksheet, answers, transcript, character flashcards and games:
https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/short-stories/much-ado-about-nothing

Introduction

In this lesson plan, which can be delivered as a 45-minute lesson or as shorter segments over three lessons, learners will be introduced to the Shakespeare play *Much Ado About Nothing* through a short animated video. They will watch the video and complete comprehension activities, and then will be guided to think about and discuss the idea of 'deception' from the play. Finally learners will develop their speaking and writing skills by surveying their classmates about the most important qualities in a friend.

Procedure

1. Introduce and watch the video (15 mins)	• Ask your learners if they have ever had a trick played on them. What was the trick? Who played the trick? Did they find the trick funny or was it a mean trick?
	• Tell the learners that they are going to watch a video called *Much Ado About Nothing*, which is a story about people playing tricks on each other.
	• Give learners the video worksheet and ask them to match the words and pictures (exercise 1). Check answers as a class. Ask learners to make some predictions about the video based on the words.
	• Play the video and ask learners to match the characters and their names as they watch (exercise 2). Ask them to compare in pairs and then check as a class.
	• Now ask learners to try to order the sentences (exercise 3). Tell them it doesn't matter if they can't remember, because they will watch the video again.

	• Play the video again and learners check their answers to exercise 3. Ask them to compare in pairs, then go through as a class.
	• At this stage, you might like to ask learners additional questions to help clarify their understanding, or ask them to say which of their earlier predictions were correct. Alternatively, play the video again and ask learners to circle true or false (exercise 4) as they watch. Fast finishers can try to correct the false sentences.
	• Ask learners if they liked the story and why. Did they think it was funny, interesting, happy/sad, etc.?
	• If your learners need more support understanding the video, you might like to adapt the transcript of the video and get learners to act it out.
2. Discuss ideas from the play (5–10 mins)	• One of the ideas in *Much Ado About Nothing* is 'deception'. The depth to which you discuss the ideas and questions in this stage will depend on your learners' age and maturity, and you may need to provide more or less support.
	• Ask your learners to say what tricks were played on Claudio in the story. Elicit:
	1. *Don John tricks Claudio by making him think Hero loves another man.*
	2. *Hero tricks Claudio by pretending to be dead.*
	3. *Leonato tricks Claudio by pretending Claudio will marry his niece, not Hero.*
	• Now ask your learners what they think Claudio should have done when Don John tries to trick him. Should he have believed Don John or should he have talked to Hero directly to find out the truth?
3. Extension (20–30 mins)	• In the play, Don John wasn't a very good friend to Claudio. Ask your learners to think about their best friend(s). What words or phrases would they use to describe them? Elicit ideas, such as 'kind', 'helpful', 'listens to me', etc., and write them on the board.
	• Ask learners to work in groups. As a group, they should discuss and agree which five qualities are the most important in a good friend.
	• Now ask learners to survey their classmates and find out which of their five agreed qualities their classmates think are the most and least important. Practise phrases they will need first, such as 'Our top five qualities are …', 'Which do you think is the most important quality?' and 'Which do you think is the least important quality?'
	• Learners should mingle and ask each classmate, recording their answers. Then they should return to their original group, compare their results and see what their class thinks are the most and least important qualities. Get class feedback on the results.
	• To round off, or for homework, learners could write a short paragraph about their best friend, saying what qualities they have and why they like them.
4. Further activities	• Would you like to extend your learners' work with *Much Ado About Nothing*? Try one of our suggested further activities here: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/shakespeare-extension-activities-kids

Contributed by

Rachael Ro