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Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Much Ado About Nothing

by William Shakespeare

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Much Ado About Nothing

Terms and Definitions

Double Entendre - a type of pun in which a word or phrase has two or more different meanings, one of which is usually sexual. **Example:** “Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads; take it in what sense you will.” –*Romeo and Juliet*

Foil - a character whose qualities or actions usually serve to emphasize the actions or qualities of the main character, the protagonist, by providing a strong contrast. On occasion, the foil is used as a contrast to a character other than the main one. **Examples:** Hotspur contrasts Prince Hal in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV, Part I*; the Roadrunner of cartoon fame uses Wile E. Coyote as his foil.

Irony - a perception of inconsistency, sometimes humorous, in which the significance and understanding of a statement or event is changed by its context. **Example:** The firehouse burned down.

- *Dramatic Irony* - the audience or reader knows more about a character’s situation than the character does and knows that the character’s understanding is incorrect. **Example:** In *Medea*, Creon asks, “What atrocities could she commit in one day?” The reader, however, knows Medea will destroy her family and Creon’s by day’s end.
- *Structural Irony* – the use of a naïve hero, whose incorrect perceptions differ from the reader’s correct ones. **Example:** Huck Finn.
- *Verbal Irony* - a discrepancy between what is said and what is really meant; sarcasm. **Example:** A large man whose nickname is “Tiny.”

Malapropism - misuse of a word for humorous effect. The term comes from a character named Mrs. Malaprop in *The Rivals*, by Sheridan. **Example:** A lawyer has “obfuscations” to the question, rather than “objections.”

Pun - an expression that achieves emphasis or humor by utilizing:

- two distinctly different meanings for the same word. **Example:** “play” meaning “fun” and “play” meaning a performance on stage.
- or
- two similar sounding words. **Example:** close/clothes.

Example: In *Romeo and Juliet*, one character, Mercutio, says after being fatally stabbed, “Ask for me tomorrow and you will find me a grave man.”

Simile - a comparison between two different things using either *like* or *as*. **Examples:** I am as hungry as a horse. The huge trees broke like twigs during the hurricane.

Soliloquy - lines in a play in which a character reveals thoughts to the audience, but not to the other characters; it is usually longer than an aside and not directed at the audience. **Example:** Hamlet’s famous “To be or not to be” speech.

Much Ado About Nothing

Objectives

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to

1. to figure out the meaning of difficult passages.
2. identify the role of “the commoner” in this play and explain how his language is different from the language of the heroes and heroines in the play.
3. define comic relief and cite examples of it in this play.
4. demonstrate how the theme “Reality versus Appearance” is developed in this play.
5. write a paragraph which discusses the significance of the play’s title.
6. write a one paragraph character sketch for each of these characters:
 - Beatrice
 - Claudio
 - Don Pedro
 - Leonato
 - Benedick
 - Hero
 - Don John
 - the Friar
7. trace these motifs in the play:
 - A. taking note of someone or something, or purposely not taking note;
 - B. harmony and disruption;
 - C. deception by others and self-deception;
 - D. perceiving of things correctly, and perceiving incorrectly.
8. summarize each of these plot threads:
 - A. the Beatrice and Benedick romance;
 - B. the Claudio and Hero romance;
 - C. the Don Pedro / Don John plot line.
9. discuss Shakespeare’s view of women and his concept of the “battle of the sexes.”

10. discuss the following plot contrivances found in Shakespeare's comedies:
 - A. multiple marriages;
 - B. boy gets girl, boy loses girl, boy is reunited with girl;
 - C. use of masks and disguises;
 - D. use of a comic figure.

11. define the language devices Shakespeare used to create comedy and give examples of their use in the play:
 - A. malapropisms;
 - B. exaggeration and raillery;
 - C. puns;
 - D. double entendres (sexual innuendoes);
 - E. sarcasm;
 - F. pomposity.

12. Speculate on which elements in this play you suppose might be found in other comedies of Shakespeare.

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Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. In one of his sonnets, Shakespeare begins:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;

In what sense do Beatrice and Benedick represent “a marriage of true minds”?

2. Unlike farces, which rely on visual humor and physical action, much of the humor in Shakespeare’s comedies comes from the way the characters use language. Define the following language devices and give examples of their use in the play:
 - A. Malapropisms
 - B. Exaggeration and raillery
 - C. Puns
 - D. Double entendres
 - E. Sarcasm
 - F. Pomposity (overblown rhetoric)
3. The following plot contrivances are staples of much comedy. State how and where each of the following are used in *Much Ado About Nothing*.
 - A. multiple marriages
 - B. boy gets girl; boy loses girl; boy is reunited with girl
 - C. the use of masks and disguises
 - D. the use of a comic figure
4. Identify wit as a comic element in the play
5. Write a one paragraph description of these characters:
Hero
Claudio
Leonato
Don Pedro
Beatrice
Benedick
Don John

6. Explain each one of the following motifs and trace its development in this play:
 - A. noting: i.e., taking note of someone or something, or purposely not taking note;
 - B. harmony and disruption
 - C. deception by others and self-deception
 - D. perceiving things correctly and perceiving incorrectly
7. Identify what the friar represents in the play and explain his role.
8. Explain the significance of the title of the play *Much Ado About Nothing*.
9. In an essay prove or refute that a major theme in this play is, “the reality of a situation may not be as it appears.”
10. State what comic relief is, and cite the instances in this play where it appears.
11. Identify the role of “the commoner” (in this case, Dogberry) in a Shakespearean play, and explain how his language is different from the language of the upper class heroes and heroines.
12. In an essay, prove that *Much Ado About Nothing* is a typical Shakespearean comedy. Be specific. Cite examples from the play to make the point.

Much Ado About Nothing

Test

Multiple Choice

1. At the beginning of the play, Leonato reads a letter that says Don Pedro has
 - A. won a victory with heavy losses.
 - B. lost a battle with heavy losses.
 - C. lost a battle but with few losses.
 - D. won a victory with few losses.
2. In Act One Benedick reveals that he
 - A. distrusts all women.
 - B. has not found a woman he can love.
 - C. thinks love is inevitable.
 - D. is jealous of Claudio for loving Hero.
3. Leonato discovers someone is in love with Hero because
 - A. he discovers a secret love letter.
 - B. a servant has overheard a conversation in the garden.
 - C. Benedick tells him.
 - D. Hero's behavior has changed.
4. Don John decides to cause trouble because
 - A. it is his nature to do so.
 - B. he is in love with Hero.
 - C. he dislikes Benedick.
 - D. he thinks love is foolish.
5. At the masked ball, Don John tells Claudio that
 - A. Benedick is in love with Beatrice.
 - B. Don Pedro intends to marry Hero.
 - C. Leonato has forbidden Hero to marry.
 - D. Beatrice is in love with him..
6. Claudio says, "Silence is the perfectest herald of joy" when he finds out that
 - A. Hero has agreed to marry him.
 - B. Beatrice has agreed to marry Benedick.
 - C. Don John is going to be punished for lying.
 - D. Don Pedro has granted him a reward for his service.

7. Don John continues to try and make trouble by arranging for Don Pedro and Claudio to watch in hiding while
 - A. Benedick seduces Beatrice.
 - B. Don John seduces Hero.
 - C. Borachio seduces Margaret while calling her "Hero."
 - D. Borachio picks a fight with Benedick.
8. Benedick thinks Beatrice is in love with him because
 - A. he finds a love poem she has written.
 - B. Hero tells him so.
 - C. she flirts with him.
 - D. he overhears Claudio and Don Pedro talking about her love for him.
9. Beatrice becomes convinced that Benedick loves her because
 - A. she finds a love poem he has written.
 - B. she overhears Hero and Ursula talking about her.
 - C. she sees the way he looks at her.
 - D. Claudio tells her so.
10. In Act III, Benedick has changed in that
 - A. he has decided never to go to war again.
 - B. he looks sad, has shaved and wears perfume.
 - C. he is learning to play the lute.
 - D. he has decided not to be friends with Claudio and Don Pedro.
11. In Act III, we meet Dogberry, the captain of the watch. He is a comic character because
 - A. he is always tripping and falling down.
 - B. he can never find his glasses.
 - C. he wears strange clothes.
 - D. he misuses language without realizing it.
12. In Act III, Beatrice has also changed her behavior. She shows signs of being in love by
 - A. feeling sick and having a cold.
 - B. deciding not to go to Hero's wedding.
 - C. showing she is jealous of Hero.
 - D. writing a long letter to Benedick which she decides not to send.
13. At the wedding in Act IV,
 - A. Claudio denounces Hero, and she falls down dead.
 - B. Claudio denounces Hero, and she faints.
 - C. Claudio denounces Hero and Leonato starts a fight with him.
 - D. Benedick denounces Hero and she runs away.

14. After Claudio and Don Pedro leave the wedding, the friar says that Hero is still alive but that the rest of them should pretend she is dead so that
 - A. the plot against her can be discovered.
 - B. she will be forgotten.
 - C. she can be smuggled out of town.
 - D. Claudio will miss her and feel sorry for what he has done.
15. Under these unusual circumstances, Benedick confesses his love for Beatrice and she demands that he prove his love by
 - A. writing her a love sonnet.
 - B. killing Claudio.
 - C. marrying her on the spot.
 - D. killing Don John.
16. In the last scene in Act IV, Dogberry gets statements from Conrade and Borachio that prove
 - A. Benedick loves Beatrice.
 - B. there are burglars and crying babies in the town.
 - C. Don John set up the plot to discredit Hero.
 - D. Don Pedro has been dishonest.
17. At the beginning of Act V, Leonato tries
 - A. to challenge Claudio to a duel.
 - B. to get Hero to appear in public.
 - C. to get Claudio to leave town.
 - D. to punish Don John.
18. After leaving Leonato, Claudio and Don Pedro meet Benedick, hoping he will raise their spirits, but instead, Benedick
 - A. refuses to speak to them.
 - B. only wants to talk about Beatrice.
 - C. says he is too busy.
 - D. challenges Claudio to a duel.
19. After Don John's plot is revealed, Claudio agrees to
 - A. enter a monastery.
 - B. marry Hero's cousin.
 - C. leave town.
 - D. swear never to marry.
20. In the final scene Beatrice and Benedick try to pretend they are not in love, but their true love is revealed because
 - A. they are already secretly married.
 - B. they have both written love poems to each other.
 - C. Don Pedro has overheard them talking.
 - D. Margaret and Ursula say so.

Essay (Answer any two)

1. Identify and discuss, in one paragraph each, four elements in this comedy that you might expect to find in other comedies of Shakespeare.
2. Trace this theme from *Much Ado About Nothing*: That which appears to be the reality of a situation may not actually be real.
3. In a drama, one character is frequently a foil for another. That is, we learn more about both characters by noting the contrast between them. In this play, state how Beatrice is a foil for both Don John and Hero?
4. This play is said to be about human malice and human frailty. In two paragraphs, state why Don John is the most malevolent character in the play and Claudio is the most frail.

Much Ado About Nothing

Test Answer Key

1. D	6. A	11. D	16. C
2. A	7. C	12. A	17. A
3. B	8. D	13. B	18. D
4. A	9. B	14. D	19. B
5. B	10. B	15. B	20. B

Much Ado About Nothing

Study Guide Teacher's Copy

ACT I, SCENE I

Vocabulary

musty—stale

victual—food

halting—limping

meet—suitable

predestinate—fated

modest—mild

recheate—hunting horn

winded—blown

baldrick—belt-strap

temporize—grow milder

embassage—errand

tuition—protection

complexion—appearance

salved—amended

treatise—explanation

1. The messenger tells Leonato, governor of Messina, that the men are returning from battle. What information does he give him (and the reader) about the following?

Claudio – Even though he is very young, he fought like a lion and Don Pedro has honored him.

Benedick – He also fought well and Claudio is his good friend.

Don Pedro – He is on this way from a victory in battle with few casualties.

Note that this news is well received, and it sets the stage for a festive, holiday atmosphere.

2. Why does Leonato explain to the messenger—

“You must not, my lord, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her. They never meet but there’s a skirmish of wit between them.”

From the way Beatrice talks it might be thought that she holds Benedick in contempt, but Leonato is explaining that Beatrice and Benedick enjoy making fun of each other. She does not dislike Benedick. The guard, who obviously holds Benedick in high regard, should not be offended by Beatrice’s humor.

3. How would you describe Beatrice based on your first impression?

She is intelligent, and has a quick tongue and a great sense of humor. She enjoys making sarcastic remarks about Benedick, and men in general.

4. In the repartee between Beatrice and Benedick, what feelings about marriage do they both claim to share?

Neither one of them seems to have much use for marriage because they do not trust or appreciate members of the opposite sex.

5. What did Beatrice mean in calling Benedick by the name Mountanto?

Mountanto" is probably related to the word "mountebank" which means a con man, huckster, or one who lies in order to better himself. She thinks he will probably brag about his deeds in battle, and she implies that he has been guilty of bragging before.

6. What does Benedick say that shows he could be considered a braggart and a ladies' man?

He claims that many women have loved him.

7. What do we learn about Don John from Leonato's words of welcome?

He has been reconciled with his brother, Don Pedro. Later, we will see that they had opposed each other in the war, and Claudio was the one who may have vanquished Don John.

8. When Claudio and Benedick are left alone, what does Claudio ask if Benedick notices? As you read the play, pay attention to other instances of noting, or not noting someone.

He asks, "[D]idst thou note" Leonato's daughter Hero. Claudio is interested in her.

9. Why does Benedick seem opposed to marriage?

He speaks about putting his neck in a yoke and losing his freedom. He also wonders with some sadness if he will ever again see a sixty-year-old bachelor who has managed to escape marriage.

10. When Benedick says he will stay a bachelor, what does Don Pedro predict?

He will see Benedick look pale with love soon. We can be sure this will happen because the comic convention calls for the one who protests the strongest about love to fall the hardest.

11. What does Don Pedro tell Claudio that he, Do Pedro, will do that night at the masked ball?

Don Pedro says that he will tell Hero he is Claudio and will speak of Claudio's love for her. Perhaps he thinks Claudio is too shy to do this himself, but we are not really given a reason why Don Pedro takes on this job.

12. One theme of the play is "appearance versus reality" or "things are not as they seem." What action is to take place that night which will not be as it seems?

Hero will hear someone, whom she believes to be Claudio, speak of his love for her; however, it will not be Claudio speaking, but Don Pedro. This will, appropriately, take place at a masked ball, where no one will appear as he or she really is.

ACT I, SCENE II

Vocabulary

thick-pleached—thick with hedges

withal—with it

peradventure—perhaps

1. What misinformation does Antonio give to Leonato?

Antonio tells him that Prince Don Pedro is in love with Leonato's daughter, Hero.

2. Where has he gotten his information?

One of his men overheard the prince speaking with Claudio and misunderstood what he had heard. It is one of many instances in which something is noted incorrectly.

ACT I, SCENE III

Vocabulary

measure—limit

breeds—causes

canker—dog-rose

enfranchised—set free

clog—heavy piece of wood; burden

March-chick—a precocious child

entertained—employed

1. How does Don John explain his depression to Conrade, one of his followers?

Don John claims that it is his temperament to be melancholy due to his astrological sign, and he does not hide what he feels.

2. What does Conrade suggest?

Since Don John has just gotten back into his brother's favor, he ought to pretend to be happy and avoid looking resentful.

3. How does Don John describe himself?

Don John says, "...it must not be denied but I am a plain dealing villain." Like other Shakespearean villains, he seems proud of his nature.

4. How did Borachio find out about Claudio and Don Pedro's plan?

While he was covering up the musty odor of a room by using a fragrant smoke, he noted the prince and Claudio talking. His occupation of perfumer is a nice touch relating to the motifs of masks and deception since he changes the natural scent of things.

5. How does Don John react to Borachio's news?

Because he is jealous and resentful of Claudio for causing his defeat, Don John is looking for a way to use this information to cause problems.

6. Explain Don John's remark about Claudio, "That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow."

Don John had been on the side fighting against his brother, and it sounds as if Claudio was the one who had defeated him in battle or, at the least, has gained in position by Don John's fall.

7. When a half-brother appears in a Shakespearean play, he usually is a resentful, angry villain. Explain how the law of primogeniture in the 16th century might have been a cause of this resentment.

The oldest, legitimate son was the heir to the father's estate, and the half-son, even if he were older, received nothing.

8. How does Don John's personality and behavior contrast with everyone else we have seen thus far?

He is a man of few words; he is also melancholy, secretive, and resentful. The other characters are talkative, witty, open, and generally happy in temperament.

ACT II, SCENE I

Vocabulary

tartly—sourly

curst—sharp-tempered

woollen—wool blankets

marl—clay

cinque-pace—a five-step dance

ancientry—formality

favour—appearance

thatched—woven

boarded—approached

accident—instance

drovier—a cattle salesman

lodge—a rabbit

rod—a whip

bestowed—used

poniards—daggers

harpy—half-woman, half-monster of Greek mythology

fain—gladly

1. What do Leonato and Antonio say to Beatrice to tease her?

They claim that because of her sharp tongue, she will never get married.

2. In what ways are Beatrice and Benedick alike?

They both speak ill of and rail mightily against marriage. In addition, they both are very talkative and dominate the scene when on stage.

3. What does Beatrice have against marriage?

She does not want to be ruled by any man. She notes that all men are made of dust, and it would not do for a woman to be mastered by a lump of dust. She also says that all men are brothers and, therefore, it would be a sin to be married to one of her brothers.

4. As the people enter the ballroom, how do they pair off?

At this point, students should picture a ballroom with people walking into the room from stage center. A man and woman speak briefly, then that couple goes off to the side to converse as a new couple takes center stage. The first couple is Hero and Don Pedro, and they are followed by Balthazar and Margaret; then come Ursula and Antonio, followed by Beatrice and Benedick.

5. How does Beatrice insult Benedick? A little later, how does the reader know that Benedick is upset?

Either not recognizing Benedick or pretending not to recognize him, she says that he is the prince's "jester, a very dull fool." When he is later on stage alone, we see how indignant he feels about this comment.

6. Don John sees his brother speaking of love to Hero. Then he sees one man still wearing a mask, and he learns from Borachio that the masked man is Claudio. Why does Don John ask Claudio if he is Signior Benedick?

He wants to convince Claudio that Don Pedro is in love with Hero in order to cause trouble, but he must do it indirectly.

7. When he is alone, what is Claudio's response to the news that Don John has just given him?

He believes he lost Hero because he relied on someone else to woo her. Friends, he says, are loyal in all things except love, where passion may cause one to forget friendship.

8. After Benedick enters and annoys Claudio so much that Claudio walks off, what is Benedick's reaction to Beatrice's earlier insult?

He is very hurt that she views him as a fool and wonders if he jokes too much, since she claims that everyone else shares this view.

9. To what does Benedick compare Claudio? What is being suggested about Claudio?

He compares him to a schoolboy. It raises an important question about Claudio's maturity. There are numerous instances in which Claudio is referred to as boyish or a boy.

10. For what reason does Benedick exit in such a hurry? In leaving, what does Benedick call Beatrice? What is suggested about their verbal dueling?

Beatrice just walked into the room. He calls her "Lady Tongue." It appears in this battle of wits that she has him somewhat intimidated.

11. Explain the pun that Benedick uses.

He uses puns that involve the words "dish" and "tongue." "Dish" refers to food, in this case something he would not eat; "tongue" is also a type of food, as well as being a reference to Beatrice's sharp manner of speech.

12. How does Don Pedro tease Beatrice? What is Don Pedro's opinion of Beatrice?

He says that she lost the heart of Benedick. Don Pedro thinks she is a happy, pleasant person.

13. How does Leonato react to Don Pedro's suggestion that Beatrice and Benedick would be a good match? Who will work toward the match of Beatrice and Benedick?

Leonato said that the two would talk themselves mad in a week. While they wait for the day of Claudio's wedding to arrive, Don Pedro suggests they try to get Beatrice and Benedick to fall in love. Don Pedro, Leonato, Hero, and Claudio agree to be involved in the plot.

14. How is Beatrice a foil to Don John? How is she also a foil for Hero?

Beatrice has a very pleasant temperament and is quite verbal, but Don John has a gloomy temperament and speaks little. While Beatrice is a sharp, aggressive female who enjoys sparring with men, Hero is more the quiet, demure, conventional female.

15. The war is over, and this happy, harmonious time is celebrated with a masquerade ball. In what way is Don John's presence an exception to the harmony?

The guests in the masks are enjoying themselves—except for Don John and his followers. The audience also knows that while the others are all in a happy frame of mind and intent on enjoying themselves, Don John is malevolent and interested in causing trouble and unhappiness for others.

ACT II, SCENE II

Vocabulary

athwart—against

cozened—cheated

1. Explain Borachio's scheme to end the marriage plans of Claudio and Hero? What is Don John's part in the plan?

In order to draw the unwitting Margaret into his plot, Borachio asks Margaret to dress as Hero. He then tells her that he will pretend to be Claudio; apparently he convinces her that this is just a harmless fantasy. Don John's part is to inform Claudio and Don Pedro that Borachio is having an affair with Hero.

2. According to Borachio, why will Margaret cooperate in this?

She is in love with him.

ACT II, SCENE III

Vocabulary

doublet—jacket

orthography—formal spelling

kid-fox—crafty young man

witness—habit

an—if

stalk—hunt

gull—trick

daffed—thrown off

tender—offer

dumb show—pantomime that precedes a main play

conference—conversation

borne—carried out

censured—judged

quips—jokes

sentences—wise sayings

career—course

humour—will

daw—bird related to the crow

1. What is the point of Benedick's soliloquy?

He cannot understand Claudio's wish to get married, and intends not to ever make that decision.

2. What does Benedick do as Leonato, Claudio, and Don Pedro enter? Why does he do this?

He decides to hide from them. He may not want to spend too much time with Claudio since all the latter wants to talk about is love.

3. What does Don Pedro notice?

He spots where Benedick is hiding.

4. In the exchange between Balthazar and Don Pedro, which begins with Don Pedro saying, "Now, pray thee, come," what is the play on words?

It involves the multiple meanings of the word "note," and it is the kind of wordplay Shakespeare and his audience enjoyed. While "notes" can mean short written reminders, "notes" are also used in music and "noting something" can mean paying attention.

5. In the conversation they hold for Benedick's sake, how do Claudio and Leonato explain the fact that while Beatrice frequently insults Benedick, she claims to love him?

They say she "flout[s]" him because she knows he would "flout" her—meaning he would tease her unmercifully if she declared her love—and that is why she does the same thing to him.

6. Describe three things that convince Benedick that these men are telling the truth.

1. *Gray haired Leonato would not trick him.*
2. *Their talk seems serious.*
3. *Hero tells them of Beatrice's feelings for him.*

7. Identify two reasons that Benedick decides to return Beatrice's love.

Benedick says, "If I do not take pity of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew." First, it would be wrong to be cruel to someone who loves loves (especially if it were someone he likes), and secondly, he would be dishonest if he did not admit that he loves her.

8. Explain Benedick's remarks: "Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending."

People who can hear of their faults and correct them are fortunate.

9. Explain Benedick's remarks: "but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age."

Although as a younger man he spoke strongly against marriage, it is natural for a man to change his opinion as he grows older.

10. What does Benedick mean when he asks, "Shall quips and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humor?"

Benedick is defending his decision to renew a relationship with Beatrice by saying that love is part of the natural course of a man's life; it should not, he tells himself, be deterred by sarcasm or verbal battles.

11. When Beatrice announces dinner to Benedick, what is his reaction to her comments?

He reads a double meaning into her words; they suggest that she really does love him. He convinces himself of her love quite easily and readily, but her words do not seem to have any hidden meaning at all.

ACT III, SCENE I

Vocabulary

lapwing—a bird that runs along the ground

woodbine—honeysuckle

coverture—cover

haggards—hawks

limed—trapped

haps—chance

1. What does Hero tell Margaret to do? What does Hero tell Ursula to do?

Margaret is told to tell Beatrice that Hero and Ursula are in the garden talking about her. Hero tells Ursula that she, Ursula, needs to praise Benedick whenever Hero mentions his name.

2. To what animal does Hero compare Beatrice?

Beatrice is compared to a fish about to be caught.

3. In the following lines Hero explains to Ursula why Benedick should not tell Beatrice his feelings. Explain them:

But nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endear'd.

Hero says that Beatrice—she knows Beatrice is listening—is a proud, conceited person who is so self-centered that she cannot love someone else.

4. How much truth is there in this criticism of Beatrice?

There seems to be some truth in it and Beatrice, for the first time, takes note of her flaws, just as Benedick did.

5. For what reasons does Beatrice decide to return Benedick's love.

She has decided to change her prideful ways because others have said that Benedick is deserving of her love. The fact that they did not tell her this, but that she accidentally overheard it, impresses her. She happily resolves to say good-bye to her own pride and contempt and allows herself to return Benedick's love.

ACT III, SCENE II

Vocabulary

consummate—complete

slops—baggy pants

civet—perfume

hobby-horses—clowns

den—evening

coldly—quietly

1. Why does Don Pedro say he chose Benedick to accompany him to Arragon after Claudio's wedding? What is Benedick's reaction?

Don Pedro chose Benedick because Benedick is a carefree, fun-loving man with no ties. Benedick, however, says he has changed.

2. Describe how Don Pedro and Claudio tease Benedick.

They claim he is taking more pains with his personal grooming, including shaving and wearing perfume and has become somber, so he must be in love. Making fun of the clothes he wears, they speak of his strange disguises. The idea of clothing causing incorrect perceptions was part of Borachio's plan to deceive Claudio.

3. Explain Benedick's remark, "Well, every one can master a grief, but he that has it."

If you are not the one in pain or sad, it is easy to say how to get over it. Later Leonato will say something similar. While spoken in sarcasm, it is no less true.

4. Why does Benedick leave with Leonato?

Presumably, he goes to talk privately with Leonato about his niece; one assumes Benedick wishes to get permission and advice to court Beatrice.

5. What does Don John mean when he says to Don Pedro and Claudio that Hero is, "Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero?" How does he propose to prove this?

He is saying that Hero has had many lovers. Don Pedro and Claudio are invited to accompany him that night to see the proof for themselves.

6. Describe how Claudio and Don Pedro respond to Don John's accusations against Hero. What do Claudio and Don Pedro plan to do if what Don John says is true? What is your opinion of Claudio and Don Pedro's reaction? What was said earlier in the play to prepare the reader for the reaction of Claudio?

They find it difficult to believe that she is unfaithful. If she proves to be so, however, Claudio had said earlier that he will disgrace her at the church rather than marry her. Don Pedro says he shall do the same. Modern readers generally view their reaction as excessive. Earlier, Don John told Claudio that Hero was going to marry Don Pedro. Claudio, who for the second time is quick to believe the worst, shows himself to be immature.

ACT III, SCENE III

Vocabulary

vagrom—vagrant

bills—weapons

pitch—tar

steal—sneak

baes— bleats

statutes—laws

weight—significance

coil— fuss

penthouse—a canopy of leaves

ducats—coins

unconfirmed—ignorant

reechy—grimy

smirched—soiled

codpiece—case on the front of a man's pants

lock—long strand of hair

Note the instances in this scene where Dogberry uses a word, frequently a long one, incorrectly. For example, at one point he says “senseless,” but he means to say “sensible.” Pay attention to the fact that while it is a comic scene, it also has much to do with noticing things correctly or incorrectly.

1. What is the job of the watch?

Their job is to keep the peace at night.

2. What does Dogberry tell them to do if they have trouble?

Dogberry is providing the watch with reasons for not taking the action they should take when they spot a wrongdoer. Like everything else about Dogberry, he gets this backwards, too. Fortunately the watchmen do not learn the lesson and wind up arresting Don John's men. Of course, they arrest them for the wrong reason: saying bad things about a prince, Don John.

3. After Dogberry leaves, what do the members of the watch conclude?

They will sit on the bench till 2:00 a.m., and then go home to bed.

4. Borachio starts to relate why he got 1000 ducats from Don John. Why does he digress?

As a result of Conrade's question, Borachio moves away from the topic and ends up talking about fashion. He says that fashion can change appearances and make men appear in different guises, a point that was made in the previous scene, when Benedict was teased about his clothing.

5. Why were Claudio and Don Pedro so easily fooled in the garden?

It was a dark night, and they thought they saw what they were told they would see. In effect, they perceived things incorrectly because they were prepared and, therefore, predisposed to misunderstand.

6. Of what crime does the watch accuse Conrade and Borachio?

The Second Watchman says that they are accused of "...the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth." While their crime smacks of lechery, the watch probably meant treachery, for treasonously speaking against Prince Don John.

ACT III, SCENE IV

Vocabulary

troth—in truth

rebato—collar

tire—headdress

wrest—pervert

light—immoral

qualm—sickness

list—please

1. Why does Hero ask Margaret if she is not ashamed of what she had said? What is Margaret's response?

Margaret is making a bawdy pun by suggesting that one day Hero's heart will be heavier by the weight of a man on top of her. Margaret defends her remark by saying they will soon be married and that marriage is an honorable state.

2. Another example of a double entendre is when Beatrice says her nose is stuffed. What is Margaret's play on the word "stuffed"?

Margaret uses "stuffed" to mean pregnant.

3. As Hero prepares to leave for the church at the end of this scene, what surprise awaits her?

Claudio and Don Pedro, if true to their words, will turn on her and disgrace her in front of all the wedding guests.

ACT III, SCENE V

Vocabulary

confidence—conference

decerns—concerns

blunt—sharp

odorous—odious

suffigance—sufficient

excommunication—communication

1. Why does Leonato become impatient with Dogberry and Verges?

They take too long to tell their story. Leonato finally tells them to examine the suspects themselves.

2. A number of times in this scene, Dogberry misuses words in his attempts to use impressive language. What words should he have used instead of the words “confidence,” “decerns,” “comprehended,” “aspicious,” and “suffigance?”

The words should be: “conference,” “concerns,” “apprehended,” “suspicious,” and “significance.” The technique Shakespeare uses is called a “malapropism,” a term based on the character Mrs. Malaprop in Richard Sheridan’s later play, “The Rivals,” Mrs. Malaprop regularly misuses long words for comic effect.

3. When Leonato says, “Neighbours, you are tedious,” how does Dogberry interpret this comment?

Leonato is in a hurry to get to the wedding, but Dogberry continues on and on. It certainly is not a compliment, but Dogberry seems to think that being tedious is a positive thing.

4. What information does the messenger give Leonato?

The wedding is ready to begin.

ACT IV, SCENE I

Vocabulary

counterpoise—match

approved—proved

wanton—whore

extenuate—annul

blown—in full flower

catechising—questioning

conjecture—suspicion

belied—betrayed

misprision—mistake

ostentation—display

1. After making a number of short comments, Claudio finally gets to the point. What does he say about both the appearance and the reality of Hero? His statement is one of the many examples of irony in the play regarding the confusion of appearance and reality.

She appears to be an innocent maiden, but she has cleverly covered the fact that she is a wanton woman. The irony is that Claudio's statement means the exact opposite of the reality.

2. Once Leonato understands what Claudio means, what does he initially suppose caused Claudio to condemn Hero?

Leonato assumes that Claudio has seduced Hero and is now condemning her for having given in to him.

3. When Leonato turns to the Don Pedro for help, what is the prince's response?

He answers that he is dishonored because he has linked his friend to someone as immoral as Hero.

4. What proof does Don Pedro give to support this low opinion of Hero?

While Hero denies that she spoke to a "ruffian" outside her window, Don Pedro relates that he, Claudio, and his brother saw her doing just that. He states that they heard the ruffian speak of the many previous "vile encounters," meaning immoral activities, between the two.

5. Claudio tells us that he shall "lock up all the gates of love." Why will he do this?

As a result of this experience with Hero, Claudio will never again even look at a beautiful woman and not be suspicious of her.

6. Once Leonato believes all this of Hero, what is his reaction when she faints?

He hopes that she will die rather than subject herself and her family to the shame and disgrace her behavior has caused.

7. What is the friar's opinion, and what is his suggestion?

Friar Francis believes that Hero is guiltless and that some error has been committed. He suggests that they spread the word that Hero has died and then make all the preparations necessary for a person who has died. Once again, there will be a difference between things as they are and as they seem to be.

8. What is the friar's object in doing this? What does the friar represent?

Hero's death will change slander to remorse. Claudio, not having prized what he had, will value what he can no longer have because of his rash speech. If the slander becomes worse, however, they can hide her for the rest of her life in a nunnery. In this scene, the friar is the voice of moderation and reason.

9. What does Leonato mean when he says, "Being that I flow in grief,/The smallest twine may lead me."

Given his numbness from grief, he will follow any suggestion.

10. What is Benedick's reaction to all this, and what is Beatrice's reaction?

Benedick says that he does not believe what was said of Hero, and he suspects Don John of being responsible. Beatrice is enraged. She shows how tough she is when she says that if she were a man, "I would eat his [Claudio's] heart in the market-place."

11. How does Beatrice get Benedick to agree to be her instrument of revenge?

She says that if Benedick really loves her, as he has been claiming repeatedly since they have been alone on stage, then he will kill Claudio for her. It is both a provocation and a test of his love.

12. Describe Leonato's reaction to Claudio's accusation in this scene and summarize the events that follow.

At first, he cannot believe what he is hearing and assumes Claudio has seduced Hero. After Don Pedro's proof, Leonato is convinced the charges are true and wants Hero to die in order to cover the shame. Hero denies the charges, however, and the friar suggests that an error has been made. Benedick vows he will get back at those who slandered Hero if that proves to be the case.

ACT IV, SCENE II

Vocabulary

sirrah—term for an inferior person

eftest—most convenient

suspect—respect

1. How does Dogberry's limited knowledge of language add to the humor in this scene?

He does not understand the words the sexton uses, but he makes a guess at them and, as usual, he guesses wrong.

2. In the examination of the witnesses, what does Dogberry think is very important?

He writes down their answers to his questions. Finally, the sexton has to tell him to call those who charge the suspects.

3. What do you suppose there is about Dogberry that makes him a typical comic figure in a Shakespearean comedy?

He is of the lower class, he tries to use big words, usually incorrectly, and he is obsessed with the order of things, even to the detriment of good sense. His name is also humorous.

4. How had Conrade wounded Dogberry, and what is the response?

When Conrade calls him an ass, Dogberry is outraged; there is no one to write it down. He will remember it, though, and make sure Conrade is charged with this crime also.

ACT V, SCENE I

Vocabulary

fetter—blind

flee—mock

fence—swordplay

foining—lunging

anticly—bizarrely dressed

scabbard—sword-case

career—mid-course

capon—eunuch

woodcock—bird thought to be stupid

transshape—distort

1. Why does Leonato say that Antonio cannot help him? What is the literary term that is used for the phrase regarding Antonio's counsel, or advice?

Despite what philosophers say, words, no matter how well intentioned, cannot ease the pain someone feels. Leonato says, "...thy counsel...as profitless/As water in a sieve..." The comparison is a simile.

2. Describe what happens between Leonato, Antonio, Claudio, and Don Pedro.

They get into an argument. Both Leonato and his older brother, Antonio, challenge Claudio to a duel. Although a serious matter, the duel is usually staged in a comic manner because they are two old men.

3. How do Don Pedro and Claudio first react to Benedick's challenge?

They are in a jesting mood and assume that he is jesting as well.

4. What does Don Pedro mean when he says, "What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit"?

A man, fancily dressed to go out, is quite a sight when he forgets to bring his wits with him and behaves foolishly.

5. How does Don Pedro mock Dogberry?

He repeats the nonsensical order of things that Dogberry used. The prince then asks the culprits their crime and says, "This learned constable is too cunning to be understood."

6. Why does Borachio so readily confess his villainy?

Answers may vary. Perhaps he truly feels great remorse for Hero's death. By confessing and expressing his emotions, perhaps he hopes to save his life.

7. What is Don Pedro and Claudio's first reaction to this news?

They are stunned.

8. What personal insult by Borachio does Dogberry insist be noted?

He says, "And, masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass."

9. What makes his insistence on this point so comical and ironic?

The reader and just about everyone else in the play—except for Dogberry himself—recognize that he actually is an ass.

10. When Borachio says that he alone killed Hero, what is Leonato's sarcastic response?

Leonato says, "No....Here stand a pair of honorable men—...that had a hand in it." He refers to Claudio and Don Pedro and their treatment of Hero.

11. For Claudio to make amends, what does Leonato require of Claudio?

Claudio must inform the people of Hero's innocence, spend the night in church, and marry Leonato's niece, who is an exact copy of Hero.

12. How guilty is Margaret in the conspiracy?

Although she should not have agreed to dress like Hero, she was unaware of Borachio's evil plan.

13. In your opinion, how guilty is Claudio when he says, "Yet sinn'd I not/But in mistaking"?

Opinions may vary: Claudio is not guilty because he made a mistake or was deceived; he is somewhat guilty because he was gullible and so shows his immaturity; he is guilty beyond any doubt because he reacted in a childish fashion by not finding out the facts before taking action.

ACT V, SCENE II

Vocabulary

bucklers—shields

vice— a screw

quondam—former

carpet-mongers—false lovers

festival—joyful

politic—clever

rheum— tears

1. How would you characterize the exchange of witty insults between Margaret and Benedick?

The insults include bawdy double entendres, puns, and concealed references to sex.

2. When Benedick says he was not “born under a rhyming planet,” what is he complaining about?

Unlike Claudio and others, Benedick cannot write poetry that rhymes smoothly because he was not born under the right astrological sign.

3. What is Beatrice’s greatest concern when she meets Benedick? What is Benedick’s response?

She asks if Benedick has done anything to Claudio to avenge Hero’s honor. He tells her the challenge has been made.

4. What news does Ursula bring?

She claims that there is proof that Hero had been falsely accused.

ACT V, SCENE III

Vocabulary

guerdon—reward

weeds—clothing

1. How is Claudio in this scene contrasted with Benedick in the last scene?

Unlike Benedick, Claudio does appear to have been born under a rhyming planet. In addition, Claudio’s solemn mourning contrasts with Benedick’s joking manner and clever use of words.

ACT V, SCENE IV

Vocabulary

confirmed—firm

countenance—facial expression

epigram—formal witticisms

1. The final curtain comes down at the end of this scene, so everything has to be resolved. What is the main question to be answered?

Will Claudio realize that Hero is alive and that he is actually marrying her?

2. Why is Benedick relieved that the confusion worked out as it does?

He does not have to call Claudio “to a reckoning for it,” which means that no duel is needed.

3. At the wedding scene, why does Claudio not immediately recognize Hero?

Hero is wearing a mask, another example of things not being what they see; it is not until she takes it off that Claudio recognizes her.

4. How does this masking of Hero, and ultimate unmasking of Hero, fit in with the play’s major theme?

Claudio is under the impression that he is marrying a cousin of Hero, but the reality is that he is marrying Hero. In effect, the play’s conclusion brings about the merging of reality and appearance when Hero removes her mask and true love prevails.

5. What resolution awaits Beatrice and Benedick?

They learn how they were set up by the others, but it does not matter to them because they are in love now. As happens in many of Shakespeare’s comedies, one marriage turns into multiple marriages.

Much Ado About Nothing

Study Guide Student Copy

ACT I, SCENE I

Vocabulary

musty—stale

victual—food

halting—limping

meet—suitable

predestinate—fated

modest—mild

recheate—hunting horn

winded—blown

baldrick—belt-strap

temporize—grow milder

embassage—errand

tuition—protection

complexion—appearance

salved—amended

treatise—explanation

1. The messenger tells Leonato, governor of Messina, that the men are returning from battle. What information does he give him (and the reader) about the following?

Claudio –

Benedick –

Don Pedro –

2. Why does Leonato explain to the messenger—

“You must not, my lord, mistake my niece. There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her. They never meet but there’s a skirmish of wit between them.”

3. How would you describe Beatrice based on your first impression?

4. In the repartee between Beatrice and Benedick, what feelings about marriage do they both claim to share?

5. What did Beatrice mean in calling Benedick by the name Mountanto?

6. What does Benedick say that shows he could be considered a braggart and a ladies’ man?

7. What do we learn about Don John from Leonato’s words of welcome?

8. When Claudio and Benedick are left alone, what does Claudio ask if Benedick notices?
As you read the play, pay attention to other instances of noting, or not noting someone.
9. Why does Benedick seem opposed to marriage?
10. When Benedick says he will stay a bachelor, what does Don Pedro predict?
11. What does Don Pedro tell Claudio that he, Do Pedro, will do that night at the masked ball?
12. One theme of the play is “appearance versus reality” or “things are not as they seem.”
What action is to take place that night which will not be as it seems?

ACT I, SCENE II

Vocabulary

thick-pleached—thick with hedges

withal—with it

peradventure—perhaps

1. What misinformation does Antonio give to Leonato?

2. Where has he gotten his information?

ACT I, SCENE III

Vocabulary

measure—limit

breeds—causes

canker—dog-rose

enfranchised—set free

clog—heavy piece of wood; burden

March-chick—a precocious child

entertained—employed

1. How does Don John explain his depression to Conrade, one of his followers?
2. What does Conrade suggest?
3. How does Don John describe himself?
4. How did Borachio find out about Claudio and Don Pedro's plan?

5. How does Don John react to Borachio's news?

6. Explain Don John's remark about Claudio, "That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow."

7. When a half-brother appears in a Shakespearean play, he usually is a resentful, angry villain. Explain how the law of primogeniture in the 16th century might have been a cause of this resentment.

8. How does Don John's personality and behavior contrast with everyone else we have seen thus far?

ACT II, SCENE I

Vocabulary

tartly—sourly

curst—sharp-tempered

woollen—wool blankets

marl—clay

cinque-pace—a five-step dance

ancientry—formality

favour—appearance

thatched—woven

boarded—approached

accident—instance

drovier—a cattle salesman

lodge—a rabbit

rod—a whip

bestowed—used

poniards—daggers

harpy—half-woman, half-monster of Greek mythology

fain—gladly

1. What do Leonato and Antonio say to Beatrice to tease her?
2. In what ways are Beatrice and Benedick alike?
3. What does Beatrice have against marriage?
4. As the people enter the ballroom, how do they pair off?

5. How does Beatrice insult Benedick? A little later, how does the reader know that Benedick is upset?
6. Don John sees his brother speaking of love to Hero. Then he sees one man still wearing a mask, and he learns from Borachio that the masked man is Claudio. Why does Don John ask Claudio if he is Signior Benedick?
7. When he is alone, what is Claudio's response to the news that Don John has just given him?
8. After Benedick enters and annoys Claudio so much that Claudio walks off, what is Benedick's reaction to Beatrice's earlier insult?
9. To what does Benedick compare Claudio? What is being suggested about Claudio?
10. For what reason does Benedick exit in such a hurry? In leaving, what does Benedick call Beatrice? What is suggested about their verbal dueling?

11. Explain the pun that Benedick uses.
12. How does Don Pedro tease Beatrice? What is Don Pedro's opinion of Beatrice?
13. How does Leonato react to Don Pedro's suggestion that Beatrice and Benedick would be a good match? Who will work toward the match of Beatrice and Benedick?
14. How is Beatrice a foil to Don John? How is she also a foil for Hero?
15. The war is over, and this happy, harmonious time is celebrated with a masquerade ball. In what way is Don John's presence an exception to the harmony?

ACT II, SCENE II

Vocabulary

athwart—against

cozened—cheated

1. Explain Borachio's scheme to end the marriage plans of Claudio and Hero? What is Don John's part in the plan?
2. According to Borachio, why will Margaret cooperate in this?

ACT II, SCENE III

Vocabulary

doublet—jacket

orthography—formal spelling

kid-fox—crafty young man

witness—habit

an—if

stalk—hunt

gull—trick

daffed—thrown off

tender—offer

dumb show—pantomime that precedes a main play

conference—conversation

borne—carried out

censured—judged

quips—jokes

sentences—wise sayings

career—course

humour—will

daw—bird related to the crow

1. What is the point of Benedick's soliloquy?
2. What does Benedick do as Leonato, Claudio, and Don Pedro enter? Why does he do this?
3. What does Don Pedro notice?
4. In the exchange between Balthazar and Don Pedro, which begins with Don Pedro saying, "Now, pray thee, come," what is the play on words?

5. In the conversation they hold for Benedick's sake, how do Claudio and Leonato explain the fact that while Beatrice frequently insults Benedick, she claims to love him?
6. Describe three things that convince Benedick that these men are telling the truth.
7. Identify two reasons that Benedick decides to return Beatrice's love.
8. Explain Benedick's remarks: "Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them to mending."
9. Explain Benedick's remarks: "but doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age."
10. What does Benedick mean when he asks, "Shall quips and sentences, and these paper bullets of the brain, awe a man from the career of his humor?"
11. When Beatrice announces dinner to Benedick, what is his reaction to her comments?

ACT III, SCENE I

Vocabulary

lapwing—a bird that runs along the ground

woodbine—honeysuckle

coverture—cover

haggards—hawks

limed—trapped

haps—chance

1. What does Hero tell Margaret to do? What does Hero tell Ursula to do?
2. To what animal does Hero compare Beatrice?
3. In the following lines Hero explains to Ursula why Benedick should not tell Beatrice his feelings. Explain them:

But nature never fram'd a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on; and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,
Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
She is so self-endear'd.
4. How much truth is there in this criticism of Beatrice?
5. For what reasons does Beatrice decide to return Benedick's love.

ACT III, SCENE II

Vocabulary

consummate—complete

slops—baggy pants

civet—perfume

hobby-horses—clowns

den—evening

coldly—quietly

1. Why does Don Pedro say he chose Benedick to accompany him to Arragon after Claudio's wedding? What is Benedick's reaction?
2. Describe how Don Pedro and Claudio tease Benedick.
3. Explain Benedick's remark, "Well, every one can master a grief, but he that has it."
4. Why does Benedick leave with Leonato?
5. What does Don John mean when he says to Don Pedro and Claudio that Hero is, "Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero?" How does he propose to prove this?
6. Describe how Claudio and Don Pedro respond to Don John's accusations against Hero. What do Claudio and Don Pedro plan to do if what Don John says is true? What is your opinion of Claudio and Don Pedro's reaction? What was said earlier in the play to prepare the reader for the reaction of Claudio?

ACT III, SCENE III

Vocabulary

vagrom—vagrant

bills—weapons

pitch—tar

steal—sneak

baes— bleats

statutes—laws

weight—significance

coil— fuss

penthouse—a canopy of leaves

ducats—coins

unconfirmed—ignorant

reechy—grimy

smirched—soiled

codpiece—case on the front of a man's pants

lock—long strand of hair

Note the instances in this scene where Dogberry uses a word, frequently a long one, incorrectly. For example, at one point he says “senseless,” but he means to say “sensible.” Pay attention to the fact that while it is a comic scene, it also has much to do with noticing things correctly or incorrectly.

1. What is the job of the watch?
2. What does Dogberry tell them to do if they have trouble?

3. After Dogberry leaves, what do the members of the watch conclude?
4. Borachio starts to relate why he got 1000 ducats from Don John. Why does he digress?
5. Why were Claudio and Don Pedro so easily fooled in the garden?
6. Of what crime does the watch accuse Conrade and Borachio?

ACT III, SCENE IV

Vocabulary

troth—in truth

rebato—collar

tire—headdress

wrest—pervert

light—immoral

qualm—sickness

list—please

1. Why does Hero ask Margaret if she is not ashamed of what she had said? What is Margaret's response?
2. Another example of a double entendre is when Beatrice says her nose is stuffed. What is Margaret's play on the word "stuffed"?
3. As Hero prepares to leave for the church at the end of this scene, what surprise awaits her?

ACT III, SCENE V

Vocabulary

confidence—conference

decerns—concerns

blunt—sharp

odorous—odious

suffigance—sufficient

excommunication—communication

1. Why does Leonato become impatient with Dogberry and Verges?
2. A number of times in this scene, Dogberry misuses words in his attempts to use impressive language. What words should he have used instead of the words “confidence,” “decerns,” “comprehended,” “aspicious,” and “suffigance?”
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4. What information does the messenger give Leonato?

ACT IV, SCENE I

Vocabulary

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approved—proved

wanton—whore

extenuate—annul

blown—in full flower

catechising—questioning

conjecture—suspicion

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1. After making a number of short comments, Claudio finally gets to the point. What does he say about both the appearance and the reality of Hero? His statement is one of the many examples of irony in the play regarding the confusion of appearance and reality.
2. Once Leonato understands what Claudio means, what does he initially suppose caused Claudio to condemn Hero?
3. When Leonato turns to the Don Pedro for help, what is the prince's response?
4. What proof does Don Pedro give to support this low opinion of Hero?
5. Claudio tells us that he shall “lock up all the gates of love.” Why will he do this?

6. Once Leonato believes all this of Hero, what is his reaction when she faints?
7. What is the friar's opinion, and what is his suggestion?
8. What is the friar's object in doing this? What does the friar represent?
9. What does Leonato mean when he says, "Being that I flow in grief,/The smallest twine may lead me."
10. What is Benedick's reaction to all this, and what is Beatrice's reaction?
11. How does Beatrice get Benedick to agree to be her instrument of revenge?
12. Describe Leonato's reaction to Claudio's accusation in this scene and summarize the events that follow.

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Vocabulary

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eftest—most convenient

suspect—respect

1. How does Dogberry's limited knowledge of language add to the humor in this scene?
2. In the examination of the witnesses, what does Dogberry think is very important?
3. What do you suppose there is about Dogberry that makes him a typical comic figure in a Shakespearean comedy?
4. How had Conrade wounded Dogberry, and what is the response?

ACT V, SCENE I

Vocabulary

fetter—blind

flee—mock

fence—swordplay

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scabbard—sword-case

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woodcock—bird thought to be stupid

transshape—distort

1. Why does Leonato say that Antonio cannot help him? What is the literary term that is used for the phrase regarding Antonio's counsel, or advice?
2. Describe what happens between Leonato, Antonio, Claudio, and Don Pedro.
3. How do Don Pedro and Claudio first react to Benedick's challenge?
4. What does Don Pedro mean when he says, "What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit"?
5. How does Don Pedro mock Dogberry?

6. Why does Borachio so readily confess his villainy?
7. What is Don Pedro and Claudio's first reaction to this news?
8. What personal insult by Borachio does Dogberry insist be noted?
9. What makes his insistence on this point so comical and ironic?
10. When Borachio says that he alone killed Hero, what is Leonato's sarcastic response?
11. For Claudio to make amends, what does Leonato require of Claudio?
12. How guilty is Margaret in the conspiracy?
13. In your opinion, how guilty is Claudio when he says, "Yet sinn'd I not/But in mistaking"?

ACT V, SCENE II

Vocabulary

bucklers—shields

vice— a screw

quondam—former

carpet-mongers—false lovers

festival—joyful

politic—clever

rheum— tears

1. How would you characterize the exchange of witty insults between Margaret and Benedick?
2. When Benedick says he was not “born under a rhyming planet,” what is he complaining about?
3. What is Beatrice’s greatest concern when she meets Benedick? What is Benedick’s response?
4. What news does Ursula bring?

ACT V, SCENE III

Vocabulary

guerdon—reward

weeds—clothing

1. How is Claudio in this scene contrasted with Benedick in the last scene?

ACT V, SCENE IV

Vocabulary

confirmed—firm

countenance—facial expression

epigram—formal witticisms

1. The final curtain comes down at the end of this scene, so everything has to be resolved. What is the main question to be answered?
2. Why is Benedick relieved that the confusion worked out as it does?
3. At the wedding scene, why does Claudio not immediately recognize Hero?
4. How does this masking of Hero, and ultimate unmasking of Hero, fit in with the play's major theme?
5. What resolution awaits Beatrice and Benedick?

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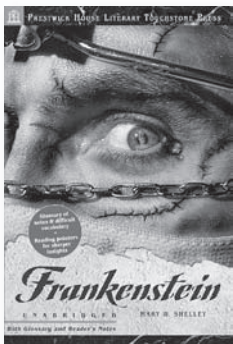
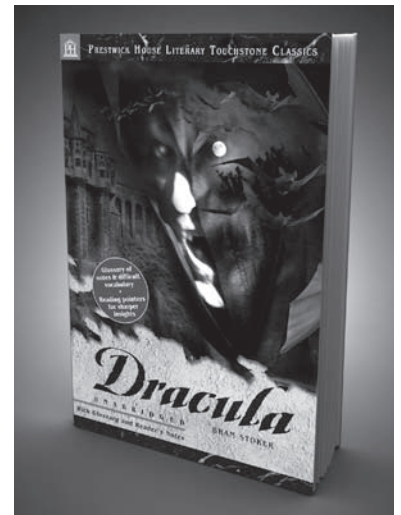
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