

# Much Ado About Nothing

## Topic

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

## Aims

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

## Age

Aged 9–12 years (CEFR B1)

## Time

90-100 minutes. This could be taught in three parts.

## 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 one long 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

### Part one (40 minutes)

#### 1. Warmer (10 minutes)

- If possible, tell learners about a time someone played a fun trick on you. Or play a trick on them.
- Elicit from learners if someone has played a trick on them before and what happened. Support with language as needed.  
**Trick example:**  
Greet them and say that the test starts in 5 minutes and you hope they've all prepared. Keep a straight face.
- Ask them to be quiet and get their pens or pencils out.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Once you've convinced them there's a test, let them know it's a trick. There's no test.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Be sensitive to the learners in your class. Only do the trick if you think your learners would find it funny.</p>
<b>1. Prediction (10 mins)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<b>While watching (10 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<b>Post watching (10 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put learners into pairs</li> <li>Ask learners to try to order the sentences (exercise 3). Tell them it doesn't matter if they can't remember everything, because they will watch the video again.</li> <li>Play the video again and learners check their answers to exercise 3. Ask them to compare in pairs, then go through as a class.</li> <li>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.</li> <li>Ask learners if they liked the story and why. Did they think it was funny, interesting, happy/sad, etc.?</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<b>Part two (20-30 minutes)</b>	
<b>Review (10 minutes)</b> OPTIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If needed, elicit from learners what they remember about the play</li> <li>Show the video again if they can't remember a lot</li> </ul>
<b>Comprehension (10 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask learners to do the true or false activity (exercise 4)</li> <li>Put them into pairs to check their answers before giving full class feedback.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Discuss ideas from the play (10 mins)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask your learners to say what tricks were played on Claudio in the story. Elicit:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Don John tricks Claudio by making him think Hero loves another man.</li> <li>2. Hero tricks Claudio by pretending to be dead.</li> <li>3. Leonato tricks Claudio by pretending Claudio will marry his niece, not Hero.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• 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?</li> </ul>
<b>Part three (30 minutes)</b>	
<b>Brain-storming (10 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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?</li> <li>• Elicit ideas, such as 'kind', 'helpful', 'listens to me', etc., and write them on the board.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative ranking (15 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put learners into groups.</li> <li>• Tell them they will discuss which five qualities are the most important in a good friend.</li> <li>• Elicit some language they could use while ranking the qualities and write it on the board. E.g.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sharing ideas</b></p> <p>...is the most important</p> <p>...isn't as important as ...</p> <p>... is more important as...</p> <p><b>Asking for opinions</b></p> <p>Do you agree?</p> <p>What do you think?</p> <p>Do you think ... is more important than ...?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Groups decide on the 5 most important qualities in a good friend and their order of importance. They record the information into their notebooks.</li> <li>• Monitor and support with language.</li> </ul>
<b>3. sharing ideas (5 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elicit what they've decided as a whole class.</li> <li>• Ask them if they have a friend with all these qualities.</li> </ul>

<b>Homework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Learners write a short paragraph about their best friend, saying what qualities they have and why they like them.</li><li>• Tell learners to refer to their ranking ideas.</li></ul>
<b>4. Further activities and useful links</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Extend your learners' work with Much Ado About Nothing: <a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/shakespeare-extension-activities-kids">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/shakespeare-extension-activities-kids</a></li><li>• BBC Bitesize teaching resources for Much ado about Nothing: <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/znkdmp3">https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/znkdmp3</a></li></ul>

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