



## EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CURRICULUM GUIDE *TO MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*

### About the Folger Shakespeare Library

The Folger Shakespeare Library houses one of the world's largest and most significant collections of materials pertaining to Shakespeare and the English and Continental Renaissance. The Folger Shakespeare Library editions of Shakespeare's plays are acclaimed throughout the world by educators, students, and general readers.

The mission of the Folger Library is to preserve and enhance its collections; to render the collections accessible to scholars for advanced research; and to advance understanding and appreciation of the Library and its collections through interpretive programs for the public.

### About the Folger Shakespeare Library's Education Department

*"There is much matter to be heard and learned."*  
*As You Like It*

Shakespeare's audience spoke of *hearing* a play, rather than of seeing one. The Folger Shakespeare Library's Education department believes in active learning, using a performance-based and language-centered approach to teaching Shakespeare. Drawing on the Folger's abundant resources and incorporating opportunities provided by the Web, their activities and workshops present innovative ways to engage children, students, and teachers in Shakespeare's work.

For a complete selection of curriculum plans from the Folger Shakespeare Library Education department, visit [www.folger.com](http://www.folger.com).

## About the Folger Shakespeare Library's Publishing Program

For nearly 70 years, the Folger Shakespeare Library has been the most respected resource for the scholarship and teaching of William Shakespeare. Designed with everyone in mind—from students to general readers—these editions feature:

- Freshly edited text based on the best early printed version of the play
- Modern spelling and punctuation
- Detailed explanatory notes conveniently placed on pages facing the text of the play
- Scene-by-scene plot summaries
- A key to famous lines and phrases
- An introduction to reading Shakespeare's language
- An essay by an outstanding scholar providing a modern perspective on the play
- Illustrations from the Folger Shakespeare Library's vast holdings of rare books
- Biographical and historical essays

To receive a complete list of available titles, e-mail your request to [folger.marketing@simonandschuster.com](mailto:folger.marketing@simonandschuster.com).

## The Shakespeare Set Free Workshops

Make meaningful learning fun. Shakespeare Set Free workshops model a fresh approach for teaching Shakespeare in grades 3-12. Based on twenty years of best practices, the Folger method inspires teachers with proven activities that address national and local standards. Schedule a one-day workshop for 20-30 teachers at your school. If you teach in New Jersey, you may be eligible for funding from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. Contact the Folger Shakespeare Library at 202-675-0380 or by e-mail at [educate@folger.edu](mailto:educate@folger.edu) for more information.

Turn the page for sample curriculum plans that you can find at <http://www.folger.com>  
Additional plans and tools are available on the website.

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## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Dear Colleagues,

Somewhere along the line, most of my students and probably most of yours have heard about William Shakespeare. Maybe they saw the film *Shakespeare in Love* or heard an answer on *Jeopardy*, but somehow, along with the ozone, they've breathed in that name: Shakespeare. In fact, to many kids Shakespeare is "sposed to be" a part of high-school education, and they expect to read one of his works. If we don't give them that exposure, they feel vaguely cheated or assume we think they're incompetent to meet the challenge of something important.

But when that anticipated moment comes and the teenage eye actually meets the Shakespearean page, then, unfortunately, that early interest too often is followed by . . . "Huh? What is this? Why are we reading this?"

The faces of the bored and defiant can make the best of us dread going into the classroom. It's happened to me, and maybe it's happened to you, but it doesn't have to be that way. Incredibly, teaching Shakespeare can actually invigorate both your class and you. . . . You have an intimate knowledge of your teaching style and of the workings of your class. Use that knowledge to select the exercises [from this packet] that you think will provoke excitement, enhance learning, and help ease your students past the language barrier and into the wonder of the play.

Here's to the magic in the play and to the magic in your classroom.

Judith Elstein

Adapted from *Shakespeare Set Free: Teaching Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth, and A Midsummer Night's Dream*

Each of the five lesson plans in this packet includes:

- Step-by-step instructions
- Materials needed
- Standards covered
- Questions students should be able to answer when the lesson is over
- Suggested related lesson plans with directions on how to find them on the Folger Web site.

Contributing Editors:

Jeremy Ehrlich

Janet Field-Pickering

Julie Kachniasz

## Curriculum Plan #1

### **Tickling the Brain (A Lesson in Plot) Developed by Jeff Schober**

Today students will improvise a few scenarios which relate to the plot of *Much Ado About Nothing*. They should have no previous knowledge of the play—they have not read any scenes or learned character names. This activity will force them to think about broad happenings they will read about, so when they begin the play they will have a base of expectations. This activity should be completed in one 40-minute period.

#### **NCTE Standards Covered:**

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

#### **What To Do:**

1. Divide students into groups of four or five. Each group will be called to the front of the room and asked to improvise one of the following scenarios written on the board:

A) Two people of the opposite sex, A and B, dislike one another and are constantly bickering. Show them taunting one another, then have B leave. Some friends enter. Have the friends convince A that B is really attracted to A. Deal with the matter of whether A believes them and why he (or she) would.

B) A different couple, X and Y, are very much in love. Create a scenario showing their affection for one another. Have X leave and friends enter. The friends have to do something to cause Y to want to break up with X.

2. Play this improvisation game as many times as necessary, depending on the number of groups you have.
3. When everyone has had a chance to act, write the names of two students who played A and B on the board. Have students copy this into their notebooks, then cross out the students' names and write Beatrice and Benedick. Do the same thing for X and Y, crossing out the students' names and inserting Hero and Claudio.
4. In the remaining class time have the students copy the scenarios into their notebooks. Their homework is to write a one-page fictional story which addresses one of the scenarios.
5. Collect the homework at the start of the next class period and distribute copies of the character map for *Much Ado About Nothing* included with these materials.

**What You Need:**

The Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* (ISBN: 0-7434-8275-1, \$4.99)

A big open area—move desks against the walls so students can get on their feet and improvise

A chalkboard

Handout (attached)

**How Did It Go?**

Did students understand the scenarios they were asked to improvise? If they asked pointed questions which went beyond the material you covered, this is a good indication that the activity has triggered their brain. A true measure of how the lesson went should be reflected in their written assignment. Ideally they will be creative while still following the plot discussed in class.

**If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You'll Want To Try:**

"Shakespeare Wall": This activity is designed to enable students to see a Shakespeare play both as a whole and as a series of scenes.

**Where Can I Find This Lesson Plan?**

1. Go to the Web site address: [www.folger.edu](http://www.folger.edu)
2. Scroll down to "Teachers and Students"
3. In the menu that appears, choose "Resources for Teachers" and then "Teaching Shakespeare"
4. Click on "Archives"
5. Click on "Lesson Plan Archives"
6. Scroll down until you get to "General Lessons"
7. Choose the lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas

## Curriculum Plan #2

### **Hero vs. Claudio: A Case of Slander** **(A Lesson in Cultural Analysis)** **Developed by Janell Bemis**

In this lesson the class will read and discuss historical information concerning marriage customs in the Renaissance and relate the information to the text of *Much Ado About Nothing*. The students will then discuss and debate the issues raised by Claudio repudiating Hero at the altar, focusing on the customs of the day, the laws concerning marriage, and Hero's case in particular. The students will stage a mock trial accusing Claudio of slandering Hero. The lesson will be summarized with a short writing assignment. The class should have read up to the beginning of Act 4 before this lesson. The lesson will cover several class periods.

#### **NCTE Standards Covered:**

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

## **What To Do:**

### **1. The Background**

Pass out Handout # 1, "Historical Background of Marriage Customs," (attached) which contains passages from documents concerning marriage customs and the laws governing marriage in Shakespeare's time. Split the students into small groups of four or five, and assign each group one or two passages to read and discuss. Then have each group share its findings with the class.

### **2. The Great Debate**

Introduce *Much Ado About Nothing* 4.1 by assigning roles and having the students read aloud. Lead the class in a debate about Hero's situation. Was she a fit bride? Was Claudio wrong to accuse her? How about Hero's father? Why did he react the way he did? Why did Beatrice get so upset? What was the role of the Friar? Was hiding Hero a good solution to the problem?

### **3. The Trial of Claudio**

Stage a mock trial. Assign all the roles: the prosecutor, Hero (or her father); the prosecuting attorney; the defendant, Claudio; the defense attorney; a judge; a jury; and witnesses. Give the students time to prepare for their roles. The only information they may use is the script of the play and the marriage customs handout.

Begin the trial. The judge announces the case and the prosecution begins its arguments with an opening statement. The defense also gives an opening statement. The prosecution then calls witnesses. The defense gets to cross-examine the witnesses. Then the defense calls its witnesses, and the prosecution cross-examines. The prosecution gives a closing argument, and the defense gives a closing argument. Then the judge gives instructions to the members of the jury, and dismisses them to consider their verdict. The jury deliberates, then returns and gives the verdict. If it is "not guilty," the case is dismissed; if it is "guilty," they give a recommendation for sentencing. The jury needs to defend its verdict, telling the judge how it came to a decision. The judge pronounces the verdict, and the case is over.

(If you don't have enough students to have a jury, an alternative could be to have the class vote on the verdict. In this case, have each student write a paragraph explaining his or her decision.)

### **4. Reflections on Consequences**

Pass out Handout #2, "Courtship and Marriage in the Renaissance" (attached). Have the students complete the handout with relevant quotations from the play and statements that reflect their understanding of these issues in modern times. Assign the students to write a short paper about their reactions to the false accusations about Hero and Claudio's

decision to publicly disgrace her. Have the students use the handout they have completed to support their opinions with quotations from the historical documents and the play. This paper could be started in class and/or completed as a homework assignment.

### **What You Need:**

The Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* (ISBN: 0-7434-8275-1, \$4.99)  
Handouts (attached)

### **How Did It Go?**

This lesson incorporates many strategies: research with historical documents, group and class discussion, debate, performance, textual analysis, and writing. There are many opportunities for assessments of the students' work through the entire process. Did the students make logical and well-supported arguments throughout? Did their writing reflect an understanding of marriage customs then and now and in the context of the play?

### **If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You'll Want To Try:**

"Murder Under Trust": This is an exercise designed to accompany the story of Macbeth and aimed at getting students to understand how primary resources may inform the text and ideas of Shakespeare's drama.

### **Where Can I Find This Lesson Plan?**

1. Go to the Web site address: [www.folger.edu](http://www.folger.edu)
2. Scroll down to "Teachers and Students"
3. In the menu that appears, choose "Resources for Teachers" and then "Teaching Shakespeare"
4. Click on "Archives"
5. Click on "Lesson Plan Archives"
6. Scroll down until you get to "Macbeth"
7. Choose the primary source lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas



## Curriculum Plan #3

### **Dogberry: The Most Vigilant Lawman Ever** (A Lesson in Language) Developed by Janell Bemis

Dogberry and his companions provide gregarious humor in *Much Ado About Nothing*. By turning the watch into bumbling fools, Shakespeare pokes fun at the law.

The goal of this lesson is to help students interpret Dogberry's haphazard speeches. The students should be able to identify his malapropisms and fix them. They should find the humor in the language of the scenes and devise actions to support the humor through performance. This lesson should take one to two class periods.

#### **NCTE Standards Covered:**

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

#### **What To Do:**

##### **DAY ONE:**

1. Read Act 3, scene 3 aloud. Each student in the class should read one line at a time until the scene is finished. Ask the class what they understood and what they didn't understand about the scene. Don't get flustered if they say, "It doesn't make sense." This reaction is a good lead-in to the activity.
2. Explain the concept of a "malapropism" (the ludicrous misuse of words, especially through confusion caused by resemblance in sound). You may wish to introduce *The Rivals* by Sheridan, and the character of Mrs. Malaprop. Although this play was written much later than *Much Ado About Nothing*, Mrs. Malaprop became so famous for misusing big words that her name became the root word for this kind of verbal confusion.

3. Read the scene aloud again and have students stop every time they find a malapropism. Write each word on the board, and have students guess at the correct word. Then have the students come up with a short definition of the correct word. Continue identifying the malapropisms.

<i>Dogberry's Word</i>	<i>Correct Word</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Desartless	Deserving	Worthy of the position
Senseless	Sensible	Logical choice
Comprehend	Apprehend	Take into custody

4. Assign students in pairs to work on 3.5, 4.2, or 5.1 to identify all of Dogberry's malapropisms. They may work on this assignment in class or complete it as homework. See the handout below.

#### DAY TWO:

5. Dogberry not only uses malapropisms; he uses entire phrases incorrectly. Ask the class to identify these phrases and find an action that illustrates them.

6. Assign students into groups of three to five, and choose a few lines for each group to perform. For example, 5.1.217-233, the scene in which Dogberry presents the prisoners, is a wonderful passage for this activity:

"Marry, sir, they have committed false report, moreover they have spoken untruths, secondarily, they are slanders, sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady, thirdly they have verified unjust things, and to conclude, they are lying knaves" (5.1.225-229).

Students should come up with the actions to fit key words or phrases, and then perform the passage to emphasize the ridiculousness of the situation.

#### **What You Need:**

The Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* (ISBN: 0-7434-8275-1, \$4.99)

Handout (attached)

#### **How Did It Go?**

Ask students to turn in their lists of malapropisms. Assign points for acting out the scenes. Then hold a class discussion to analyze each performance. What did the actors do to illustrate Dogberry's incompetence? Were the scenes funny? Why or why not?

### **If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You'll Want To Try:**

"Metaphors in Shakespeare": This lesson will enable students to identify metaphors in Shakespeare's plays, understand the metaphorical relationships expressed and place those metaphors in the context of the play as a whole.

### **Where Can I Find This Lesson Plan?**

1. Go to the Web site address: [www.folger.edu](http://www.folger.edu)
2. Scroll down to "Teachers and Students"
3. In the menu that appears, choose "Resources for Teachers" and then "Teaching Shakespeare"
4. Click on "Archives"
5. Click on "Lesson Plan Archives"
6. Scroll down until you get to "General Lessons"
7. Choose the lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas

## Curriculum Plan #4

### **Change Slander to Remorse: Unspoken Answers and Unscripted Scenes (A Lesson in Performance) Developed by Sue Biondo-Hench and Janet Field-Pickering**

Many of Shakespeare's plays offer tantalizing tidbits of information that allude to scenes, moments, and responses that are not included within the specific text of the play. For example, in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Beatrice says of Benedick, "You always end with a jade's trick; I know you of old," making it clear that Beatrice and Benedick had been involved earlier without clearly explaining why the relationship had gone awry. In this lesson, the students will hypothesize about the content of these unscripted moments and responses, search for evidence in the actual text to support their hypothesis, and explore how this hypothesis would affect characterization.

This activity emphasizes higher level thinking, performance, and problem solving through direct involvement with the text.

This lesson will take at least two class sessions to complete.

#### **NCTE Standards Covered:**

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

### **What To Do:**

1. After reading the play, return to the moment in Act 4 scene 1 when Hero comes out of her faint after being falsely accused by Claudio on their wedding day. Her friends devise a plan to pretend she is dead until they figure out how to clear her name. Hero doesn't speak much in this scene, but it is obvious that she is filled with many conflicting emotions about what just happened to her.
2. Divide the students into groups, and ask them to complete the following tasks:
  - a. Create a scene that reveals what happens to Hero during the time she is pretending to be dead. We know how Beatrice feels, but how does Hero feel about Claudio and her father? How do her friends comfort her? How do they keep it all a secret?
  - b. Look for textual evidence that supports your characterization of Hero and her friends.
  - c. Write and rehearse a script that will bring this scene to life.
  - d. Prepare a report (including textual support) of your group's decision-making process during the creation and rehearsal of the scene.
3. Have each group perform its scene and present its report.
4. Discuss the similarities and differences among the scenes and responses.

### **What You Need:**

The Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* (ISBN: 0-7434-8275-1, \$4.99)

### **How Did It Go?**

Did the students create and perform a scene that was logically supported with evidence from the text? Was the defense clear and complete? Was the performance (both scenes and the defense) prepared and interesting?

### **If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You'll Want To Try:**

"Lights, Camera, Action": In this lesson students will interpret the play by creating a silent movie, requiring them to think creatively and enhance their storytelling skills in verbal, nonverbal and written form.

### **Where Can I Find This Lesson Plan?**

1. Go to the Web site address: [www.folger.edu](http://www.folger.edu)
2. Scroll down to "Teachers and Students"
3. In the menu that appears, choose "Resources for Teachers" and then "Teaching

Shakespeare”

4. Click on “Archives”
5. Click on “Lesson Plan Archives”
6. Scroll down until you get to “Interactive Media Lessons”
7. Choose the lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas

## Curriculum Plan #5

### **A Boxful of Character** **(A Lesson in Character Analysis)** **Developed by Linda G. Wolford**

In this lesson students will create life boxes based on the text of *Much Ado About Nothing* and present these boxes to the class. A life box is a container with everyday items that relate to a character. Choosing items to represent elements of a character will necessitate careful reading of the text. Using details from the text to explain their choices will require students to use critical thinking. Sharing their creations will expand all of the students' understanding of the characters.

This lesson plan will take two class periods.

#### **NCTE Standards Covered:**

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

#### **What To Do:**

Preparation: students will have read at least halfway through the play.

1. Explain the concept of a character life box. A life box is a container of carefully chosen items that represent a particular character in a play. The box must contain six to eight things the character might use daily or have as a keepsake. A line from the play must be cited to justify each item. The lines can be either spoken by the character or by another character in the play. No photos—items only. A shoebox is a good container, but other appropriate containers are okay (pillowcase, cigar box, purse, etc.), particularly if they support character analysis.
2. Assign students to work in pairs. The students pick a character and gather items to put in their box. They find text to support each item choice and record a description of the

item, an explanation of why it was chosen, and a corresponding phrase or sentence from the play. This list will be handed in.

3. The students bring in the finished projects and present them to the class. They share their items and explanations by holding up and describing each item and reading or telling what lines of text support their choice.

### **What You Need:**

The Folger Shakespeare Library edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* (ISBN: 0-7434-8275-1, \$4.99)

### **How Did It Go?**

Did the students find six to eight items? Did the items represent the character appropriately? Could the students support their choices with text?

A discussion of which items clearly defined each character helps students differentiate and understand character motivation and development. If you choose to start this project when the students are only halfway through a play, you could extend the project by having them add more items to the box as they finish the play.

### **If You And Your Class Enjoyed This Curriculum Plan, You'll Want To Try:**

"A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words": Students design and create photo albums that tell the story of the play.

### **Where Can I Find This Lesson Plan?**

1. Go to the Web site address: [www.folger.edu](http://www.folger.edu)
2. Scroll down to "Teachers and Students"
3. In the menu that appears, choose "Resources for Teachers" and then "Teaching Shakespeare"
4. Click on "Archives"
5. Click on "Lesson Plan Archives"
6. Scroll down until you get to "General Lessons"
7. Choose the lesson plan listed above or browse the other titles for more classroom ideas



### **Also Available from the Folger Shakespeare Library**

Shakespeare wrote more than twenty plays\*, and many are terrific for students. Whether tragedy or comedy, all will teach students about the age of Shakespeare, about the subtle manipulation of language and image, and about the dramatic construction of character in a new and exciting way. Additional titles include:

Hamlet (ISBN: 0-7432-7712-X )

Macbeth (ISBN: 0-7432-7710-3)

Romeo and Juliet (ISBN: 0-7432-7711-1)

A Midsummer Night's Dream (ISBN: 0-7432-7754-5)

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Julius Caesar (ISBN: 0-7432-8274-3)

The Taming of the Shrew (ISBN: 0-7432-7757-X)

The Merchant of Venice (ISBN: 0-7432-7756-1)

King Lear (ISBN: 0-7432-8276-X)

\*For a complete list of available titles, please e-mail your request to [folger.marketing@simonandschuster.com](mailto:folger.marketing@simonandschuster.com)

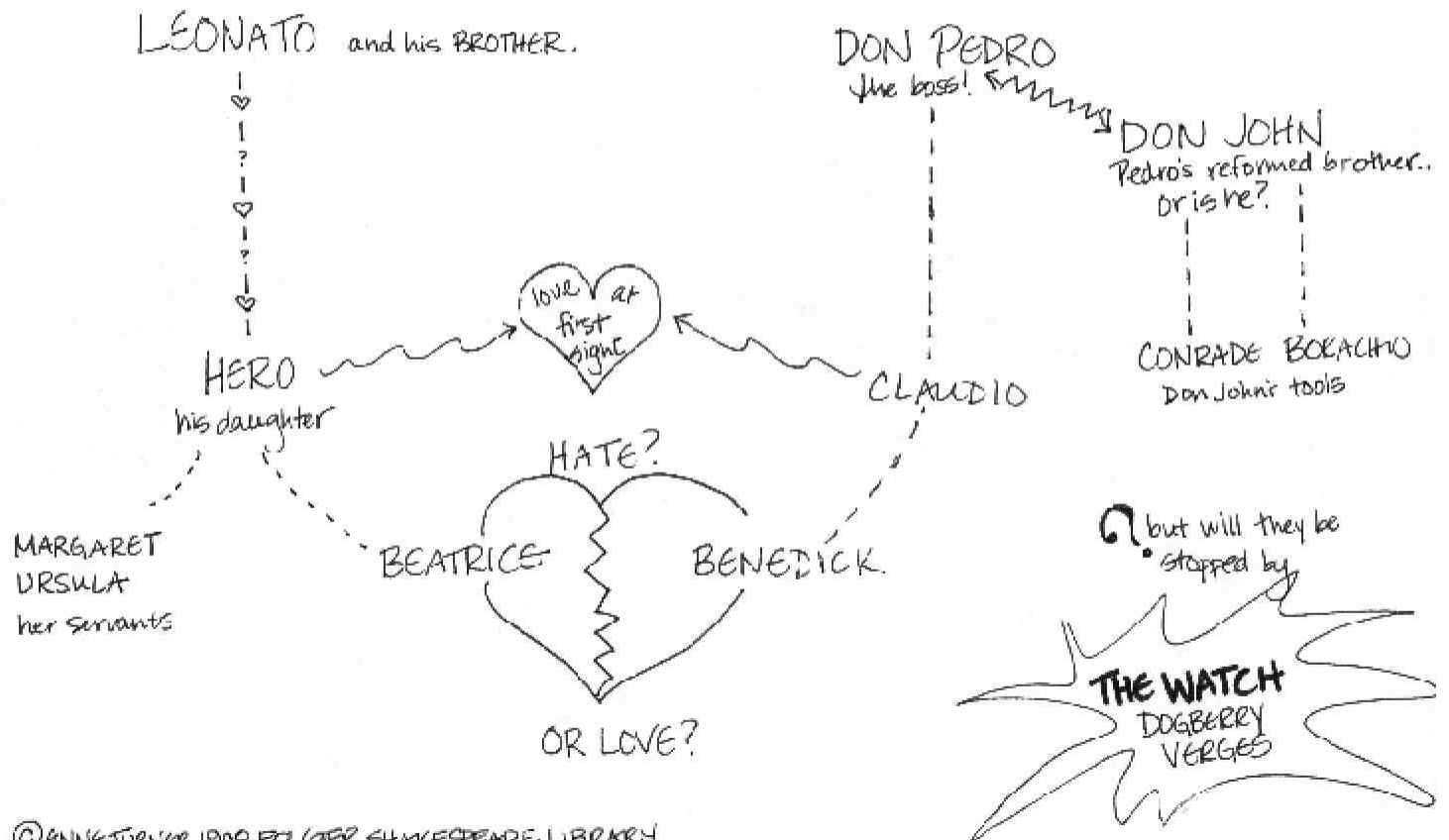
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## LEONATO'S PLACE

Where we meet...

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING-

## THE PRINCE'S MEN



Handout for Curriculum Plan #2  
**Hero vs. Claudio: A Case of Slander**

**Handout # 1: Historical Background of Marriage Customs**

**Age of Consent**

"At the seventh year of her age, her father shall have aid of his tenants to marry her. At nine years of age, she is able to deserve and have dower. At twelve years to consent to marriage. At fourteen to be *hors du guard* [outside wardship]. At sixteen to be past the Lord's tender of a husband. At twenty one to be able to make a feoffment [land grant]. And *per Ingelton* therein the end of the case. A woman married at twelve cannot disagree afterward. But if she be married younger, she may dissent till she be fourteen." (*Law's* 33)

**Dating**

" . . . it becometh not a maid to talk where her father and mother be in communication about her marriage, but leave all that care and charge wholly unto them which love her as well as her self doth. And let her think that her father and mother will provide no less diligently for her than she wolde for herself, but much better, by the season they have more experience and wisdom." (Vives XVI)

**Dowry**

"Though matrimony do always proceed dower, yet doth not dower always follow matrimony. For first, where the husband has no land, the wife can have no dower by the common law." (*Law's* 43)

**Engagement**

"The first promising and inception of marriage is in two parts. . . . The first is when a man and a woman bind themselves simply by their word only to contract matrimony hereafter. The second, when there is an oath made or somewhat taken as an earnest of pledge betwixt them on both parts or on one part to be married hereafter." (*Law's* 34)

"Those spousals which are made when a man is without witness, *solus com sola* [he alone with her], are called secret promising or desponsation, which though it be tolerated when by liquid and plain probation it may appear to a judge, and there is not any lawful impediment to hinder the contract, yet it is so little esteemed of (unless it be very manifest) that another promise public made after it shall be preferred and prevail against it." (*Law's* 35)

**Marriage Ceremony**

"Marriage is defined to be a conjunction of man and woman, containing an inseparable connection and union of life." (*Law's* 34)

### Worthiness

" . . . first let her understand the chastity is the principal virtue of a woman, and couterpeiseth with all the rest. If she have that, no man will look for any other; and if she lack that, no man will regard other." (Vives XI)

"Hippomenes, a great man of Athens, when he knew his daughter desoiled of one, he shut her up in a stable with a wild horse, kept meatless. For the horse, when he had suffered great hunger long and because he was of nature fierce, he waxed mad and all to-tare the young woman to feed himself with . . ." (Vives VII)

"In Spain by our father's days in Tarraco, two brethren that thought their sister had been a maid, when they saw her great with child, they dissembled their anger so long as she was with child. But as soon as she was delivered of her child, they thrust swords into her belly and slew her, the midwife looking on." (Vives VII)

### Works Cited

*The Law's Resolution of Women's Rights*. London, 1632. In *Daughters, Wives, and Widows: Writings by Men About Women and marriage in England, 1500-1640*. Ed. Joan Larsen Klein. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1992.

Vives, Juan Luis. *A Very Fruitfull and Pleasant Booke called Instruction of a Christian Woman*. London, 1523.

## Handout #2: Courtship and Marriage in the Renaissance

*Find evidence in the play Much Ado About Nothing that supports the quotation at the left. Some examples have been given. Write your evidence in the space provided; also write down your understanding of the customs in modern times.*

Marriage Customs	Shakespeare	Modern Times
Age of Consent		
<p>"At the seventh year of her age, her father shall have aid of his tenants to marry her. At nine years of age, she is able to deserve and have dower. At twelve years to consent to marriage. At fourteen to be <i>hors du guard</i> [outside wardship]. At sixteen to be past the Lord's tender of a husband. At twenty one to be able to make a feoffement [land grant]. And <i>per Ingelton</i> therein the end of the case. A woman married at twelve cannot disagree afterward. But if she be married younger, she may dissent till she be fourteen." (<i>Law's</i> 33)</p>		
Dating		
<p>" . . . it becometh not a maid to talk where her father and mother be in communication about her marriage, but leave all that care and charge wholly unto them which love her as well as her self doth. And let her think that her father and mother will provide no less diligently for her than she wolde for herself, but much better, by the season they have more experience and wisdom." (Vives XVI)</p>	<p>Prince: [to Claudio] If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it, and I will break with her and with her father, and thou shalt have her. (1.1.303-305)</p> <p>Leonato's Brother: [to Hero] Well, niece, I trust you will be ruled by your father? (2.1.50-51)</p>	

Marriage Customs	Shakespeare	Modern Times
Dowry		
<p>"Though matrimony do always proceed dower, yet doth not dower always follow matrimony. For first, where the husband has no land, the wife can have no dower by the common law." (<i>Law's</i> 43)</p>	<p>Claudio: Hath Leonato any son, my lord? Prince: No child but Hero, she's his only heir. (1.1.288-289)</p>	
Engagement		
<p><b>Engagement</b>            "The first promising and inception of marriage is in two parts. . . . The first is when a man and a woman bind themselves simply by their word only to contract matrimony hereafter. The second, when there is an oath made or somewhat taken as an earnest of pledge betwixt them on both parts or on one part to be married hereafter."            (<i>Law's</i> 34)</p> <p>"Those spousals which are made when a man is without witness, <i>solus com sola</i> [he alone with her], are called secret promising or desponsation, which though it be tolerated when by liquid and plain probation it may appear to a judge, and there is not any lawful impediment to hinder the contract, yet it is so little esteemed of (unless it be very manifest) that another promise public made after it shall be preferred and prevail against it." (<i>Law's</i> 35)</p>		

Marriage Ceremony		
"Marriage is defined to be a conjunction of man and woman, containing an inseparable connection and union of life." ( <i>Law's</i> 34)		
Worthiness		
<p>" . . . first let her understand the chastity is the principal virtue of a woman, and couterpeiseth with all the rest. If she have that, no man will look for any other; and if she lack that, no man will regard other." (Vives XI)</p> <p>"Hippomenes, a great man of Athens, when he knew his daughter desoiled of one, he shut her up in a stable with a wild horse, kept meatless. For the horse, when he had suffered great hunger long and because he was of nature fierce, we waxed mad and all to-tare the young woman to feed himself with . . ." (Vives VII)</p> <p>"In Spain by our father's days in Tarraco, two brethren that thought their sister had been a maid, when they saw her great with child, they dissembled their anger so long as she was with child. But as soon as she was delivered of her child, they thrust swords into her belly and slew her, the midwife looking on." (Vives VII)</p>	<p>Leonato: By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband if thou be so shrew of thy tongue. (2.1.18-19)</p> <p>Claudio: [to Leonato] There, Leonato, take her back again. Give not this rotten orange to your friend. (4.1.31-32)</p>	

**Handout for Curriculum Plan #3**

Dogberry

<b>Dogberry's Word</b>	<b>Correct Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Desartless	Deserving	Worthy of the position
Senseless	Sensible	Logical choice
Comprehend	Apprehend	Take into custody