



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE



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Written by Amber Reed

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading**Setting and History**

Objective: Researching the historical setting of the play

Activity

Much Ado About Nothing is set in Messina, a city on the northeast tip of Sicily.

Using the library, the Internet, or both, research the history of the setting. Your research should include information about Messina, the island of Sicily, and Italy. Focus on the time period in which the play occurs, and include any significant facts about the world at that time.

Use this research to complete the **Setting Chart** on the next page.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act I**Characterization****Objective:** Recognizing character traits**Activity**

While good drama certainly classifies as literature, readers must remember that playwrights intend plays to be watched—not read. The text of a drama, such as *Much Ado About Nothing*, contains few indicators of the physical appearance or behavior of the characters. Without the help of physical descriptions, readers must seek other clues to best imagine the way that characters look and behave. These clues might materialize in the script as characters interact, converse, or make observations of each other.

Evaluate the characters in Act I using the **Character Chart**. In the appropriate spaces, briefly describe each character and determine whether you think he or she is or will be a major character. When you finish the chart, select the two most similar characters on the chart and write a one-paragraph comparison of them. Next, select the two least similar characters and write another paragraph, but this time contrasting them.

The first character has been completed for you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act I**Emotions**

Objective: Finding quotes that portray emotions

Activity

Much Ado About Nothing is an emotional play. The main characters experience emotional extremes, from grief to happiness. These emotional extremes help to create uncertainty, anticipation, and ultimately, surprise for the audience.

The **Emotion Chart** on the next page contains a list of emotions depicted in *Much Ado About Nothing*. Find a source for each emotion, identify the corresponding characters, and quote them on the chart. If the quote does not adequately portray the emotion, explain the context of the emotion.

Complete the chart as you progress through the play.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act II

Outlining

Objective: Writing an outline

Activity

Imagine that you are the marketing director for a popular city theater. To increase revenue, you have decided to offer framed photographs of scenes from plays. Audience members will have the opportunity to purchase the photos at the theater gift shop. The photographs for *Much Ado About Nothing* have been selected, but each scene requires a description.

Beginning with Act II, outline each act by scenes. On your outline, create an appropriate title for each act, and write a brief synopsis of each scene. The descriptions should reveal the significance of the specific scenes. Act I is completed for you.

Example:

- I. Act I:
 - A. Scene I: Soldiers return from the war
 - 1. Beatrice and Benedick have a battle of wits
 - 2. Benedick swears to never marry
 - 3. Claudio falls for Hero
 - 4. Don Pedro plans to win Hero for Claudio
 - B. Scene II: Don Pedro's plan revealed
 - 1. Antonio tells Leonato about Don Pedro's plans
 - 2. Leonato plans to inform Hero
 - C. Scene III: Don John sees opportunity
 - 1. Don John sulks
 - 2. Borachio reports Don Pedro's plan
 - 3. Don John begins plotting

II. Act II:

Continue the outline as you complete each act.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act III**Simile****Objective:** Recognizing a simile**Activity**

Like most of Shakespeare's drama, *Much Ado About Nothing* is laden with simile. Some instances are easily interpretable, but others are challenging because some Elizabethan phrases are uncommon in modern English.

Using the **Simile Chart**, identify five instances of simile in Act III. Use the provided space to write an interpretation of each simile. In your interpretations, try to include modern similes with equivalent meanings.

Two examples of simile from the play are provided for you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Acts I – III**Metaphor**

Objective: Recognizing and interpreting metaphors

Activity

Like most Shakespeare plays, *Much Ado About Nothing* contains several instances of metaphor.

The **Metaphor Chart** lists seven examples of metaphor in the first three acts of *Much Ado About Nothing*. For each example, identify the character that uses the metaphor, and then explain the metaphor.

The first metaphor is completed for you.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act IV**Metaphor****Objective:** Recognizing and interpreting metaphors**Activity**

Shakespeare's complex prose sometimes helps to disguise instances of metaphor from readers. In the text, the object of a metaphor is not always adjacent to the metaphor. Sometimes, Shakespeare excludes the linking verbs (forms of *to be*) that often signal the presence of metaphor.

The **Metaphor Chart** provides locations of metaphor in Act IV, and each instance includes a brief description of the context in which the metaphor can be found. Using the context as guidance, locate the metaphor for each example and write it on the chart. Include the name of the character that uses the metaphor.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Act V**Wanted Posters****Objective:** Creating wanted posters**Activity**

Much Ado About Nothing teeters on the line of comedy and tragedy due to a combination of deviant characters and conflicting personalities. A few minor changes in chronology or action could turn the play into a tragic story.

Identify the characters that appear to be the main source of conflict in the play. They do not have to be evil characters, necessarily, but they should exhibit some flaw that creates problems in the plot of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Using simple art supplies or a computer drawing program, create wanted posters for two of the characters that you have chosen. Your wanted poster should include a picture of the character's face, the character's name, and a list of the character's offenses. Since you are making a wanted poster, you will also need to include a reward incentive, and it should be based on the nature of the crime and the threat of the character. Be certain to include warnings for anyone who might encounter the character.

Create two wanted posters. Each poster should fit on a single page.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Acts I – V**Characterization I****Objective:** Analyzing characters in the play**Activity**

Psychiatrists examine patients, determine the source of problems, and implement possible solutions. The proper examination of a patient may require detailed information regarding the patient's family life and social environment. Using personal observations and facts gathered from the patient, the doctor might then make a diagnosis.

You are now a modern psychiatrist, and below is a list of your patients for today. Write down your initial analysis for each patient and the possible source of the problem. In the **treatment** column, suggest a treatment. To diagnose the characters, assume that they are at their worst point in the play. Remember, one character may have multiple disorders, each of which may require a different treatment.