

Much Ado About Nothing

Analytical Essay Questions for Exam Practice

Students are required to write an analytical interpretation of the text in response to the chosen question/topic. The answer must be supported by close reference to the text. Approximate length 800 – 1000 words.

1. How do the ideas of love and war intersect in the play?
2. How does Shakespeare convey and challenge early modern ideas about women in *Much Ado About Nothing*?
3. "I would fain know what you have to say."
In what ways is language used in *Much Ado About Nothing*?
4. What roles do the different kinds of humour play in *Much Ado About Nothing*?
5. "Oh villain! Thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this."
What role do Oogberry's malapropisms play in *Much Ado About Nothing*?
6. 'Shakespeare's characters hide their insecurities behind innuendo and metaphor.' Discuss with reference to at least three characters in *Much Ado About Nothing*.
7. How does Shakespeare use comedy in *Much Ado About Nothing* to explore serious themes and values?
8. 'The two pairs of lovers, Beatrice and Benedick, and Hero and Claudio, are very different, yet there are also similarities.' Discuss.
9. 'Don John is the only example of authenticity in *Much Ado About Nothing*; all the other characters wear masks of some sort, at some time in the play.' Do you agree?
10. 'Immaturity explains and extenuates Hero's passivity.' Do you agree?
11. 'It is Beatrice's views on marriage that reveals about her character.' Discuss.
12. 'Benedick could be seen as the ultimate misogynist in *Much Ado About Nothing*.' Do you agree?
13. 'Something lacking in the character of Don Pedro is what drives him so eagerly to encourage the courtships of others in *Much Ado About Nothing*.' Do you agree?
14. "I speak not like a dotard, nor a fool, / As under privilege of age to brag" (Leonato)
'It is their privilege that makes the behaviour of characters in *Much Ado About Nothing* all the more reprehensible.' Discuss.
15. "I will assume thy part in some disguise, / And tell fair Hero I am Claudio" (Don Pedro) 'We accept the deceptions in the play because mostly the characters' intentions are benign.' To what extent do you agree?
16. "... yet sinned I not, / But in mistaking."
'Forgiveness is too freely given in *Much Ado About Nothing*.' Discuss.
17. '*Much Ado About Nothing* is a joyful play which celebrates human relationships.' Do you agree?

18. 'The women in *Much Ado About Nothing* are the true holders of power.' Discuss.
19. One of the traditional elements of romantic comedy is that the marriage at the end of the play is often a symbolic political settlement. Is this true of *Much Ado About Nothing*?
20. 'The courting of Beatrice and Benedick, two most unlikely lovers, provides a satirical and less romanticised view of love.' Discuss.
21. 'The witty arguments between Beatrice and Benedick about the dominance of males or females are starkly contrasted in the plot involving Hero and Claudio.' Discuss.
22. '*Much Ado About Nothing* highlights the discrepancy between appearance and reality.' Discuss.
23. 'The deceptions in *Much Ado About Nothing* are relatively harmless, yet many of them have the potential to be destructive. Despite emerging unscathed, many of the characters do see that their vision of reality is overly idealised.' Do you agree?
24. Why do Shakespeare's 'ideal' lovers occupy so much less space in *Much Ado about Nothing* than his 'mismatched' lovers?
25. How does Shakespeare emphasise the importance of honour among women before they marry?
26. 'None of the characters changes or develops in the course of the play.' To what extent do you agree?
27. 'Although *Much Ado About Nothing* is a comedy, it also has dark elements that reveal human flaws.' Discuss.
28. '*Much Ado About Nothing* ultimately presents a positive view of marriage.' Do you agree?
29. 'Despite the comic banter of Beatrice and Benedick, *Much Ado About* confronts some serious issues. Discuss.
30. 'Men were deceivers ever.'
Is this true of the men in *Much Ado About*?