

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare

This task is intended to demonstrate how you can apply a few flexible quotations to questions on a range of themes and characters. Have a look at how these five brief key quotations have been developed into brief but solid points on different possible questions:

- **The oxymoron ‘merry war’ presents:**
 - the conflict between Beatrice and Benedick as entertainment
 - Beatrice and Benedick as witty and therefore well-matched
 - an unusually equal balance in a relationship between a man and a woman.
- **The metaphor ‘rotten orange’ shows**
 - how successful Don Pedro and Borachio’s deception has been
 - the importance of honour, as virginity is seen as crucial for women
 - how Claudio’s view of Hero, and therefore his love for her, has spoiled and turned bad.
- **The noun ‘jewel’ indicates**
 - how idealistic Claudio is in thinking about Hero
 - that women were objectified in Elizabethan times
 - that Claudio is not really thinking about Hero as a person.
- **The repetition of ‘I am an ass’ is used to**
 - make the audience laugh because it is inappropriate
 - show Dogberry’s stupidity because he has misunderstood what is important
 - give light relief in between more tense moments.
- **The connotations of ‘Monsieur Love’ convey**
 - Benedick’s dismissive attitude towards romance
 - a comedic tone to prepare the audience for the comedy of the gulling scenes
 - that Claudio has become consumed by love.

Here are some of the key themes, characters and contextual aspects that you might want to write about:

Beatrice	Benedick	Claudio	Hero
Men and women	Honour	Jealousy	Comedy
Elizabethan times	Deception	Family	Love

Task: Choose a quotation (one above or one of your own) and develop it into at least three full points on completely different themes or characters. For a real challenge in one of your points, combine two (imagine a practice question like ‘how does Shakespeare present Hero as an ideal Elizabethan woman?’ which puts a character together with an idea.)

Additional task: identify the themes, contextual factors and/or characters being written about in the points above.