between the lines

A lesson written for every student in the room

FREE LESSON SAMPLER

Much Ado About Nothing: A stuffed man

How does Shakespeare present Beatrice before Benedick arrives?

Lesson 3 of 33 from the scheme of learning

Teacher notes, slides and student pages at all three levels

Written for the AQA specification



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What is in this sampler

This is one complete lesson from our Much Ado About Nothing scheme for Literature Paper 1, Section A. It comes exactly as it appears in the full scheme, so you can teach it next week and see how our lessons work.

Teacher notes	Timings with slide numbers, Do Now answers, the exploded quotation, the hinge question and what each answer tells you, the task at three levels, a model paragraph and notes on misconceptions and adapting the lesson (next pages).
Slides	The editable PowerPoint deck for Lesson 3, with teacher notes on every slide (separate file).
Student pages	The lesson's pages from the student booklet: one question, with the Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support side by side (at the end of this document).

How every lesson works

Know	Do Now from memory, vocabulary, then the reading. The five Do Now questions build on what students learned in Lessons 1 and 2 of the full scheme.
Apply	Explode one quotation together; a hinge question checks understanding.
Master	One shared question answered as a What–How–Why paragraph, with Securing, Strengthening and Soaring support; then a model paragraph and an exit ticket.

Three levels of support

Every student answers the same question in every lesson. What changes is the support on the page, so the whole class does the same lesson:

Securing	The most support: a word bank, a choice of quotations, a worked example and sentence starters. For students working towards a grade 4.
Strengthening	Prompts for What, How and Why, a paragraph planner and a checklist. For students working at grades 5 and 6.
Soaring	A debatable statement, prompts to think further and an argument planner. For students aiming at grades 7 to 9.

The names describe the support, never the student. The hinge question shows who might start where, and students move between levels from lesson to lesson.

In the full scheme

- 33 lessons like this one, with editable slides and a teacher handbook (lesson notes, unit map, assessment guide and knowledge bank)
- A student booklet with every lesson and all three levels of support, plus the same lessons as one pack per level
- Six weeks of independent practice homework at three levels

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- Four Feedback Loop progress checks with whole-class feedback sheets and improvement tasks
- An exam-style end-of-unit essay with a teacher guide, level guidance and annotated model answers
- A Soaring stretch booklet for students aiming at the top levels
- A catch-up sheet for every lesson, for students who missed it
- An inclusion guide: pre-teaching, SEND, EAL and pupil premium notes for every lesson
- The revision workbook and the model answer pack, to print for every student
- Every licence for the scheme also includes its 30 Raising Achievement drills for intervention sessions

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Lesson 3: A stuffed man

SEQUENCE 1: CONTEXT AND ACT 1 · 60 MINUTES

How does Shakespeare present Beatrice before Benedick arrives?

By the end of the lesson, students can

- Explain how Beatrice turns the messenger's praise of Benedick into insults, in prose
- Analyse how Shakespeare gives Beatrice her wit before she meets Benedick
- Write a What–How–Why paragraph on how Shakespeare presents Beatrice as witty before Benedick arrives

Lesson at a glance

Time	Phase	What happens	Slides
0–8	Know	Do Now: five quick questions on Lesson 1 and the KS3 terms. Students self-mark from the answer slide.	2–3
8–20	Know	Pre-teach "wit", "pun", "valiant" and "victual". Read the extract aloud, with one student as Beatrice and one as the Messenger, then ask: whose jokes get the last word?	4–6
20–30	Apply	Explode the quotation together. Think aloud about what happens to a compliment when Beatrice repeats it, then students annotate their copy. Before you reveal any notes, students try the four empty boxes on the first explode slide, on their own or after you model one box.	7–8
30–35	Apply	Hinge question on mini-whiteboards. Use the answers to decide who starts on which level of support.	9–10
35–53	Master	Students write one What–How–Why paragraph using their level of support in the student booklet. Share the model paragraph in the last five minutes and ask students to check their spelling of names and their full stops (AO4).	11–12
53–60	Master	Exit ticket. Collect and sort into three piles to plan the start of Lesson 4.	13

Do Now answers

1	What was a comedy in Shakespeare's time?	**A play with a happy ending, usually a marriage. It did not have to be full of jokes.**
2	What did a man's honour depend on in Shakespeare's time?	**His word and his courage, which he might defend in a duel**
3	Why did Hero's marriage matter to two families?	**A marriage joined two families' money and lands, and Hero is Leonato's only heir; a daughter married with her father's consent**
4	What is the "merry war" in the play?	**Leonato's phrase for the quarrel of insults between Beatrice and Benedick**
5	What is a pun?	**A joke that plays on a word with two meanings, or on two words that sound alike**

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Vocabulary

wit	quick, clever humour with words
pun	a joke on a word with two meanings
valiant	brave, especially in a fight
victual	food and drink; an old word, usually plural

Reading

Act 1 Scene 1: Beatrice asks about Benedick

Leonato's household is waiting for Don Pedro and his soldiers to come back from the war. A messenger brings news, and Beatrice, Leonato's niece, asks about Signior Benedick.

BEATRICE.
I pray you, is Signior Mountanto returned from the wars or no?

MESSENGER.
I know none of that name, lady: there was none such in the army of any sort.

LEONATO.
What is he that you ask for, niece?

HERO.
My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

MESSENGER.
O, he's returned; and as pleasant as ever he was.

BEATRICE.
He set up his bills here in Messina and challenged Cupid at the flight; and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt. I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for indeed I promised to eat all of his killing.

LEONATO.
Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

MESSENGER.
He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

BEATRICE.
You had musty victual, and he hath holp to eat it: he is a very valiant trencherman; he hath an excellent stomach.

MESSENGER.
And a good soldier too, lady.

BEATRICE.
And a good soldier to a lady: but what is he to a lord?

MESSENGER.
A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

BEATRICE.
It is so, indeed; he is no less than a stuffed man: but for the stuffing—well, we are all mortal.

William Shakespeare, Much Ado About Nothing (1598–99), Act 1 Scene 1

Word help **Mountanto**: a fencing thrust upward: Beatrice's name for Benedick the show-off · **bird-bolt**: a blunt arrow for shooting birds · **trencherman**: a hearty eater · **holp**: helped

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Explode the quotation

Method

Backhanded praise in prose. The Messenger has just said Benedick is "stuffed with all honourable virtues", and Beatrice repeats the word and turns it.

Zoom in

"stuffed" is an adjective with two meanings: full of good qualities, and packed with straw like a dummy. "no less than" sounds generous.

"he is no less than a stuffed man"

Effect

The audience laughs, and sees that the Messenger cannot keep up. Beatrice leaves her next remark unfinished, so the audience fills it in.

Purpose

Shakespeare shows Beatrice's wit before Benedick walks on. The audience learns what the "merry war" will sound like, and who is quicker with words.

Hinge question

Beatrice says Benedick is "a stuffed man". What is she doing?

A. Agreeing with the Messenger that Benedick is full of honourable virtues.

B. Describing how thin and tired Benedick looks after the war.

C. Twisting the Messenger's praise into a joke against Benedick. (the right answer)

What the answers tell you

A means the student has taken the line as a compliment and missed the sarcasm: these may be your students who start on Securing, so read the Messenger's line and Beatrice's reply together. B shows a literal reading of "stuffed" as a physical description: ask what a stuffed man is made of, and move to the Zoom in note.

Why the answer is right

Beatrice repeats the Messenger's word "stuffed" and gives it a second meaning, a dummy filled with straw, so the compliment becomes an insult.

Master task

How does Shakespeare present Beatrice as witty before Benedick arrives in Act 1 Scene 1?

Securing aiming for a 4

Quotations to choose from

"is Signior Mountanto returned from the wars or no?"

"he is a very valiant trencherman"

"I promised to eat all of his killing"

Starters

Shakespeare presents Beatrice as ____ before Benedick arrives. She says ____. The ____ (adjective or noun) ____ suggests ____. This makes the audience ____, and Shakespeare wants us to see that ____.

Strengthening aiming for grades 5 to 6

Prompts

What: Make a clear point about how Beatrice speaks of Benedick before he arrives.

How: Choose a quotation from the extract. Name the method (sarcasm, a nickname, a pun, a metaphor) and zoom in on one word.

Why: Why does Shakespeare let the audience hear Beatrice's wit before they see her with Benedick? Think about the "merry war" and what a comedy audience expects.

Soaring aiming for grades 7 to 9

The debate

"Beatrice's jokes show that she cares more about Benedick than she admits. How far do you agree?"

Write two paragraphs. In the second, give an alternative reading that begins with "Alternatively".

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