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Put students into groups of three. One of them asks the questions while the other two play the game.

There are four kinds of questions shown on the shapes by different capital letters:

- Women’s status (W)
- Shakespeare’s language (L)
- Comedy (C)
- Masks (M)

You can choose whether or not to allow the students to read the information first which contains the answers they will need.

The questions should be cut out and put in four piles and you will need counters in four different colours.
Women

In Elizabethan times women were seen legally as property. Fathers owned daughters until they married. Fathers gave or received money (dowry) for their daughters, so it was important that they married as rich a husband as possible. A woman had to keep her good reputation and virginity. It was important that she did not have sex before marriage. If she did she would risk being dishonoured, unable to marry and shunned by her family. As a result, people often married very young and very quickly. They did not always marry for love. They sometimes married a person that their family chose for them. It would be almost unheard of for rich to marry poor. In this play, Hero should marry Claudio, but Don John’s secret plan stops this from happening. Claudio believes that Hero has had sex and he doesn’t want to marry her any more.

Comedy

In Shakespeare’s time it was the fashion to talk very cleverly and make clever jokes. This was called wit. Some characters in the plays show how clever they are by teasing each other. The audience thought this was funny. Beatrice and Benedick have a love-hate relationship. They show this by teasing each other but sometimes they hurt each other too much. They use their wit to hide their true feelings and protect their pride. The audience would have found the misunderstandings in the play very funny. For example Benedick overhears some people saying that Beatrice is in love with him. He believes this and decides to fall in love with her. Beatrice is an excellent example of Shakespeare using clever language to entertain the audience. For example, she makes fun of the messenger because he is very serious. She asks how many people Benedick has killed at war because she has promised to eat all he has killed.
Language

Shakespeare wrote his plays four hundred years ago when the English language was different. For example, ‘an’ meant ‘if’, ‘meet’ meant ‘right’ and ‘hath’ meant ‘has’. The theatre would not have had modern lighting or special effects so Shakespeare had to set his scene with his words. In Shakespeare’s time the special effects were the words the actors spoke. Shakespeare uses language full of images. These are word pictures, e.g. ‘I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.’ Many of these are metaphors, e.g. ‘Is it possible Disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it, as Signor Benedick?’ In this example, Beatrice pretends that Benedick is good food for disliking men. There are also similes, e.g. ‘O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease.’ In this example, Beatrice says people can catch Benedick like they catch a disease. Oxymorons are words which cannot go together, e.g. ‘a hot January’. There are many examples of double meanings as well. Beatrice and Benedick spend much of the day quarrelling and their merry war uses many jokes. These jokes would keep the audience entertained. For example Benedick teases Beatrice with the line ‘I would my horse had the speed of your tongue.’

Masks

Masked balls happened at parties. People covered their faces with masks, men chose women to dance with and the masks allowed people to keep their identities secret. This meant people could make mistakes or behave badly, they could hide what they had done, or they could pretend to be someone else. Don Pedro pretended to be Claudio and Beatrice pretended not to recognise Benedick. In this play people are confused just like a masked ball confuses people. There are secret plans: Don Pedro had a secret plan to make Beatrice and Benedick fall in love and Don John had a secret plan to make Claudio hate Hero. Characters make mistakes and they believe lies. Characters listen to each other in secret, and they are tricked by what they hear. Beatrice heard Hero and Ursula telling lies about Benedick, and she believed them.
### Blockbusters

**Women**
- In Shakespeare’s time, what was the legal position of women?

**Women**
- What was a dowry?

**Women**
- Why were there so many rules about what women could or could not do in Elizabethan times?

**Women**
- What happened to women who were discovered to have had sex before they were married?

**Women**
- Why did Claudio decide not to marry Hero?

**Comedy**
- Who invented the plot to stop Claudio and Hero from getting married?

**Comedy**
- Which two characters tease each other a lot in the play?

**Comedy**
- Who overhears people saying that Beatrice is in love with him?

**Comedy**
- What did Beatrice say about Benedick in the war?

**Comedy**
- What does ‘wit’ mean in Shakespeare’s plays?

**Masks**
- What was a masked ball?

**Masks**
- Who made a secret plan so that Beatrice and Benedick would fall in love?

**Masks**
- Who pretended to be Claudio?

**Masks**
- Why did people enjoy going to masked balls?

**Masks**
- Who pretended not to recognise Benedick?

**Language**
- What kind of imagery is in this quote: ‘Is it possible Disdain should die when she hath such meet food to feed it?’

**Language**
- Is ‘He will hang upon him like a disease’ a simile or a metaphor?

**Language**
- What kind of imagery is in ‘a merry war’?

**Language**
- Translate this into simple modern English: ‘I would my horse had the speed of your tongue.’