

# Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare (YEAR 8)

## Terminology

**Iambic pentameter**—The name given to the rhythm that Shakespeare uses in his plays. The rhythm of iambic pentameter is like a heartbeat, with ten beats per line.

**Prose and Verse**— Much Ado About Nothing is written in a combination of prose and verse. Prose is a conversational way of speaking which doesn't have a set rhythm or structure. Verse always has a set rhythm and structure and is more poetic.

**Rhyming Couplets**— Rhyming couplets are two lines written one after the other and end in the same sound, or a rhyme. They are often used to sum up the end of a character's speech.

**Imagery**— Visually descriptive language.

**Antithesis**— Antithesis happens when two opposites are put together. For example, hot and cold or light and dark.

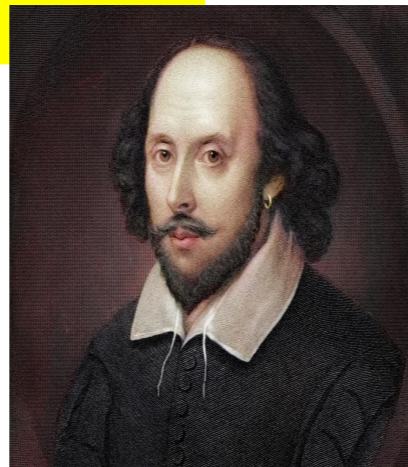
**Betrothed**— The person to whom one is engaged to, to be married.

**Illegitimate**— The state of being born to parents not lawfully married to each other.

## Context

### William Shakespeare - (1564-1616)

In his 52 years of life William Shakespeare transformed himself from the son of a small-town glovemaker to a favourite playwright of the Monarchy of the time. Today he is celebrated as the most popular writer in the English language. Shakespeare was a prolific writer during the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages of British theatre (sometimes called the English Renaissance or the Early Modern Period). Shakespeare's plays are perhaps his most widely accomplished legacy, but they are not all he wrote. Shakespeare's poems also remain popular to this day.



### Much Ado About Nothing:

The play was written in 1598 and is generally considered one of Shakespeare's best comedies, because it combines elements of humour and wit, with more serious matters of honour, shame, and court politics. Many critics have noted that the plot of *Much Ado About Nothing* shares significant elements with that of *Romeo and Juliet*.

## Themes

- Social class/court life
- Humour
- Love
- Relationships
- Honour
- Deception
- Women



## Key Quotations

*"I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow, than a man swear he loves me."*  
Beatrice (Act 1, Scene 1)

*"Silence is the perfectest herald of joy. I were but little happy if I could say how much."*  
Claudio (Act 2, Scene 1)

*'When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.'*  
Benedick (Act 2 Scene 3)

*"Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps."*  
Hero (Act 3, Scene 1)

*"I will live in thy heart, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy eyes."*  
Benedick (Act 5, Scene 2)

