

Much Ado About Nothing: Themes for Writing Consideration

Directions: The topics below suggest a persuasive mode. Read over, plan and outline, then construct an essay that supports, refutes, or qualifies the position stated. AP papers ALWAYS require supporting text; minimal support is one quote/citation per paragraph. Edit, revise, critique.

1. "The character Hero is appropriately named." You will first need to develop a working idea of "hero." Consider ways she is an admirable character in both word and action.
2. "The love relationship between Benedick and Beatrice is anything but a love relationship: it is marked by wit, paradox, manipulation." Consider how Benedick's arrogance enables him to think he is 'above love' and Beatrice's independent nature would not lend itself to her being a giving person.
3. "Don John is portrayed in this play in a most disappointing way." The reader does not know much about his disdain for his brother, for his desire to mess up other people's lives, or for his relentless efforts to cause pain.
4. "The character Leonato displays a confusing demeanor." One wonders if he really cares for his daughter's future, if he seeks social acceptance more than his daughter's happiness, if he just wants to 'marry her off' for royalty's sake.
5. "Shakespeare is using characters, in particular Dogberry, to make a critical statement about the legal system." Consider the characters' education, understanding of the law, ability to speak in an articulate manner.
6. "Love is complicated and ambiguous: not all emotions can be understood, explained, or portrayed as reasonable." Choose 2-3 characters that appear to represent a portrait of these ideas.
7. "Characters in *Much Ado About Nothing* marry, not because they are in love, but because they fear loneliness and being ostracized from their family." It might be wise to respond to this question as it applies to couples, though there are individuals to whom one could apply the ideas as well.
8. "Love in this play lacks a genuine perspective; it appears to be more about tricks, games, and disguises." These ideas can be real or imagined; it can entail manipulation of situations or people.
9. "The language of the play suggests that relationships in *Much Ado About Nothing* are similar to military relations; that is, people 'play on each other' to gain what they desire." It would be good to look specifically at the language (word choices, diction, references to military terms) if writing about this question.
10. "Characters in *Much Ado About Nothing* fall into the roles given to them in the lies told about them." These lies or misconceptions ultimately define the character rather than the character's genuineness or integrity.