

Recipe for a Shakespearean comedy

Much Ado About Nothing by William Shakespeare

Much Ado About Nothing is one of Shakespeare's comedies. Shakespeare's audience would have known the 'rules' of the genre (a little bit like how modern audiences know the 'rules' of, for example, an action film). It's almost as if there was a recipe for a romantic comedy - and that's what you are going to create.



True or false?

It is notoriously difficult to pinpoint what distinguishes a Shakespearean comedy from a tragedy or history play, as there are some similarities! But to prepare yourself for creating a recipe that separates the genres, decide which of these elements are true or false for a Shakespearean comedy:

Feature	True or false?
Theme of love	
Theme of war	
Mistaken identities	
Death	
Clever word play and puns	
Insults	
Complex plots	
Family tensions	
An ill-fated central character	
Foreign settings	

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Recipe for a comedy

To complete the next task, you'll need to remind yourself of the following aspects of a Shakespearean comedy. From your knowledge of Shakespeare's comedies based on any you might have studied or know of, what would you expect of:

the setting?	A castle? A port? Sunshine? A storm? Foreign?
the characters?	Ill-fated? Witty? A dashing prince?
typical themes?	War? Love? Nature?
the plot?	Complex? Family disputes? A wedding? A death?
the ending?	A happy ending?

Once you've done this, you're ready to write your recipe. Try to make it as similar to a real recipe as you can, using some of these ideas to help you:



Ingredients:

A dollop of...
A pinch of...
Plenty of...
A handful of...
A dash of...

Instructions:

Whisk...
Mix...
Combine...
Whip up...
Fold in....
Bake for....

Your own comedy

Below, you can see a list of some of the specific ingredients for *Much Ado About Nothing*. Using your choice of these characters, settings and plots, write a summary of your own Shakespearean comedy. You're not trying to recreate the plot of *Much Ado About Nothing*, however - you are aiming to show that you understand the genre of comedy.

- A love-struck young man
- A dashing prince
- A dastardly prince determined to spoil everything
- A beautiful, innocent young girl
- Two chatterboxes who are secretly in love with each other
- An easily fooled old man
- A clueless policeman and his assistant
- An Italian setting
- A recent war
- A disrupted wedding
- A fake funeral
- A double wedding
- A case of mistaken identity
- A prank
- Singing and dancing

