ACT I

• Why is it significant that Don Pedro and his men are returning from the wars?

• Why does Beatrice ask about Benedick? What is the "real" reason?

• Beatrice and Benedick say that lovers are fools, and they want nothing to do with love. Why do you think they say this?

• How does Benedick react to Claudio's declaration that Hero is "the sweetest lady that ever I looked on"?

• Why does Claudio send Don Pedro as his emissary to Hero to declare his love?

• Why does Don John want to cause trouble? Why is he so morose?

ACT II

• What are Beatrice's reasons for not wanting to have anything to do with men?

• What are Leonato's instruction to his daughter, Hero, and what do these show about traditional attitudes?

• According to the stage directions for the dance, Don John is not masked during the revels? Why?

• Do you think Beatrice and Benedick know each other when they speak behind their masks? Why? Why not?

• Why does Don John pretend that he does not recognize Claudio?

• How does Benedick feel about his conversation with Beatrice?

• What does Beatrice mean when she says, "once before he [Benedick] won it [my heart] of me with false dice"? (II, i, 277-278) [p. 57]

• Why is Claudio unable to speak when Don Pedro tells him that the Lady Hero is his?

• Why does Don Pedro's plan work so well?

• How does Benedick rationalize himself into loving Beatrice?

ACT III

• Why do the women praise Benedick so highly when they describe how he loves Beatrice?

• Why does Hero say that she will not tell Beatrice about Benedick's love?

• How fair are the women in their description of Beatrice's behavior? Is she too hard on men? (Think back to her description of Don John.) Why are they devoting so much time to her reputation for "disdain"?

• What is Beatrice's reaction to the women's speech?

• Why do the men make fun of Benedick?

• How does Don John plan to deceive Claudio and Don Pedro?

• Why does the Watch arrest Borachio and Conrade?

ACT IV

• How does Claudio judge Hero's behavior when he accuses her?

• How do the rest of the company react? How can you explain in relationship to their other behavior in the play Leonato's denunciation, Benedick's confusion, and Beatrice's conviction that Hero has been slandered?

• How does the Friar propose to judge the situation?

• What does the Friar hope will happen as a result of his plan to have it published that Hero is dead? What kind of change does he think will come about in Claudio?

• What happens between Benedick and Beatrice?

• Why does Beatrice want to kill Claudio?

• How does the confusion in the speech of Dogberry fit the theme of appearance versus reality?

ACT V

• What does Antonio say that gets Leonato to think again about his passionate denunciation of Hero?

• Does Leonato think Hero is guilty of being unvirtuous? Why? Why not?

• Do you think Claudio makes a move to draw his sword against Leonato? Why or why not?

• What is the purpose of this scene in which Leonato and his brother Antonio challenge Claudio for slandering Hero?

• What is Claudio's attitude? What does this show about his character? Does it fit with your sense of his character?

• How does Don Pedro act when Benedick meets them? What is your reaction to the exchange of the three men? Why do you think they are acting as they do?

• To what extent is the punishment Leonato places on Claudio fitting? Why does he want Claudio to believe that he has killed Hero?

• Why do Beatrice and Benedick talk about loving each other only according to "reason"? How do they really feel about each other?

AFTER READING