

HAMLET STUDY GUIDE

ANSWERS

ALLEGORY

- A story in which the literal meaning represents another level of meaning.
- It is a form of extended metaphor, in which objects, persons, and actions are associated with the meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. The underlying meaning has moral, social, religious, or political significance, and characters are often personifications of abstract ideas such as charity, greed, or envy.
- An allegory is a story with two meanings: a literal and a symbolic meaning.

ALLITERATION

- The repetition of identical consonant sounds at the beginning of closely associated words.
- Ex. Peter Piper picked...

ALLUSION

- A brief direct or indirect reference to a person, event, place (real or fictitious), or to a work of art, or fiction, which the author assumes/hopes the reader will recognize.
- Allusion is most typically a casual reference to a famous historical or literary figure or event.
- Most allusions expand or develop a significant idea, impression, or mood in the story.

APOSTROPHE

- A statement, question, or request addressed to an inanimate object or concept to a nonexistent or absent person.
- Ex. A poet asking the muses for inspiration. “Oh, Canada, our home and native land.” or “Death, be not proud.” or “Frailty, thy name is woman.”

ASIDE

- A comment made by a stage performer that is intended to be closely heard by the audience but supposedly not by other characters.

BLANK VERSE

- Poetry written in unrhymed lines of iambic pentameter.

CHARACTER FOIL/FOIL

- A character who is used to contrast opposing traits with another character so that the reader better understands the personality and motivation of the protagonist.
- By being so villainous, foils are used to make the protagonist seemed heroic by contrast.
- For example, the ugly stepsister's are foils to Cinderella and their differences emphasize Cinderella's sweetness and virtue.

HYPERBOLE

- Deliberate overstatement or exaggeration to achieve emphasis.

IAMBIC PENTAMETER

- A line composed of five iambic feet (ie. Five pairs of stressed and unstressed syllables)

IMAGERY

- The pattern of images in a single piece of writing; often the images allude to more than the surface idea and create meaning through metaphor.

IRONY

- Involves contrast between two elements so that the appearance of things differs from reality (in terms of meaning, situation, or action); and provides depth of meaning and impact.
- Ex: A doctor's appointment being cancelled because the doctor was sick.

LITOTES

- A statement that lessens or minimizes the importance of what is meant. Ex. If you were in the desert and it was 45 degrees Celsius, you might say “It’s rather warm out today.”

METAPHOR

- A direct comparison between objects. (without using like or as)
- Ex. Anger is a caged beast. His words were a knife that cut me deeply. All the world's a stage.

PERSONIFICATION

- Giving an inanimate or non-human thing human characteristics.

ONOMATOPOEIA

- A word whose sound suggests its meaning. For example, the bee buzzes, or plop, smash, bang.

OXYMORON

- Phrases with an inherent contradiction. For example, living dead.

REPETITION

- Words repeated for emphasis

SIMILE

- A comparison of two things using like or as.
- Ex, the kitten was as cute as a button.

SOLILOQUY

- A monologue in drama used to give the audience information and to develop the speaker's character. This is typically a projection of the character's innermost thoughts and is usually delivered while the character is alone on stage.

STAGE DIRECTION

- The directions given to the actor within the script for what they are supposed to do.
- Often in square brackets. [stage direction]

SYMBOL

- An object that represents or stands in for a more abstract idea.
- Characters, objects, events, settings can all be symbolic.

TRAGEDY

- A noble, courageous hero of excellent character who, because of a tragic character flaw, brings ruin upon him or herself. Treats subjects in a dignified and serious manner, using poetic language to evoke pity and fear and bring about a purging of emotions.

QUOTES

- First ten you have to identify who they're speaking to/about.
- Second ten identify speaker and the context/situation of the scene.

EXCELLENT, EXCELLENT WELL. YOU'RE A FISHMONGER.

- About: Polonius
- Speaker: Hamlet
- Context: They're conversing and Hamlet is acting mad, but his statements are filled with truth.

HER BROTHER IS IN SECRET COME FROM FRANCE/FEEDS ON THIS WONDER, KEEPS HIMSELF IN THE CLOUDS.

- About: Laertes
- Speaker: Claudius
- Context: Ophelia has gone mad. Polonius is dead. Laertes has returned from France to find out what's happening.

HOW LONG HAS THOU BEEN A GRAVEMAKER?

- About: First Clown
- Speaker: Hamlet
- Context: Hamlet and Horatio are in the cemetery. They (mostly Hamlet) encounter a man digging a grave and want to know who it's for and about the grave digger.

THE SERPENT THAT DID STING THY FATHER'S LIFE/NOW WEARS HIS CROWN.

- About: Claudius
- Speaker: Ghost
- Context: Hamlet is talking to the ghost of his father, and his father is informing him of what happened to him.

NO, NO, I NEVER GAVE YOU AUGHT.

- About: Ophelia
- Speaker: Hamlet
- Context: Ophelia wants to return some gifts Hamlet gave her, but Hamlet is saying he never gave her anything because they have both changed.

BESIDES TO BE DEMANDED OF A SPONGE—WHAT REPLICATION SHOULD BE MADE THE THE SON OF THE KING.

- About: Rosencrantz
- Speaker: Hamlet
- Context: Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are trying to find out the location of Polonius's body from Hamlet. Hamlet refuses to tell them and insult Rosencrantz for his idolization of the king.

STAY, ILLUSION./IF THOU HAST ANY SOUND OR USE OF VOICE,/SPEAK TO ME.

- About: The ghost of Hamlet's father
- Speaker: Horatio
- Context: Horatio has been brought up to the platform to see the ghost that the guards have seen. He tries to find out what it has to say, but it doesn't answer.

THOU LIV'ST. REPORT ME AND MY CAUSE ARIGHT TO THE UNSATISFIED.

- About: Horatio
- Speaker: Hamlet
- Context: Hamlet is dying from poison after the duel. Horatio wants to join him, but Hamlet says that he must live and tell the story to those who weren't there so everyone can know what went on.

MY LORD, HE HATH IMPORTUNED ME WITH LOVE/IN HONOURABLE FASHION.

- About: Hamlet
- Speaker: Ophelia
- Context: Polonius is inquiring about what Ophelia and Laertes were talking about. Ophelia admits that Hamlet has been courting her.

MOTHER, YOU HAVE MY FATHER MUCH OFFENDED.

- About: Gertrude
- Speaker: Hamlet
- Context: Gertrude is trying to scold Hamlet for putting on a play that upset Claudius, but Hamlet returns with a scolding of his own.

WHY AS A WOODCOCK TO MINE OWN SPRINGE, OSRIC; / I AM JUSTLY KILL'D WITH MINE OWN TREACHERY.

- About/To: Osríc
- Speaker: Laertes
- Context: Hamlet and Laertes are duelling. Both are cut with the poison sword. Osríc asks Laertes if he's okay and Laertes admits that he is going to die because of his treachery.

SEEMS, MADAM! NAY, IT IS, I KNOW NOT 'SEEMS.'

- About/To: Gertrude
- Speaker: Hamlet
- Context: Hamlet's mother is worried about his grief and why he is mourning for so long. She wants to check in with him to make sure he's okay. She implies that he seems to be mourning and Hamlet is upset. He IS mourning.

**THIS ABOVE ALL: TO THINE OWN SELF BE
TRUE,/AND IT MUST FOLLOW, AS THE
NIGHT THE DAY/THOU CANST BE FALSE TO
ANY MAN.**

- About/To: Laertes
- Speaker: Polonius
- Context: Laertes is going to France so Polonius is trying to offer him some fatherly advice.

WITH HIS DOUBLET/ALL UNBRAC'D;/ NO HAT UPON HIS HEAD; HIS STOCKINGS FOUL'D,/UNGARTE'D AND DOWN GYVED TO HIS ANKLE.

- About: Hamlet
- To: Polonius
- Speaker: Ophelia
- Context: Hamlet has come to visit Ophelia in a state of dishevelment and it has really upset her. She tells all this to Polonius and he believes that the source of Hamlet's madness is lovesickness.

BUT KNOW, THOU NOBLE YOUTH,/THE SERPENT THAT DID STING THY FATHER'S LIFE/NOW WEARS HIS CROWN.

- About: Claudius
- To: Hamlet
- Speaker: Ghost of Hamlet's Father
- Context: Hamlet is speaking with the ghost of his father and the ghost is telling him that he was murdered and how it was done and who did it, namely Claudius.

SOMETHING IS ROTTEN IN THE STATE OF DENMARK.

- About: The ghost/everything that's gone on.
- To: Horatio
- Speaker: Marcellus
- Context: Hamlet has run off to speak to the ghost against the urging of his friends. The ghost means that something bad is going on in Denmark. They decide to follow Hamlet.

AT SUCH TIME I'LL LOOSE MY DAUGHTER TO HIM./BE YOU AND I BEHIND AN ARRAS THEN/MARK THE ENCOUNTER.

- About: Ophelia/Hamlet
- To: Claudius
- Speaker: Polonius
- Context: This is one of Polonius's many plans to figure out the source of Hamlet's madness. He plans on getting Hamlet and Ophelia into the same room together while he and the king hide behind a tapestry to eavesdrop.

TO BE OR NOT TO BE; THAT IS THE QUESTION:/WHETHER TIS NOBLER IN THE MIND TO SUFFER/THE SLINGS AND ARROWS OF OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE,/ OR TO TAKE ARMS AGAINST A SEA OF TROUBLES,/ AND BY OPPOSING END THEM.

- About: Hamlet
- Speaker: Hamlet
- Context: Hamlet is reflecting on death and whether it's better to be alive or dead. Claudius and Polonius are hiding behind the tapestry to listen in on the conversation he's about to have with Ophelia.

**AND I, OF LADIES MOST DEJECT AND
WRETCHED,/THAT SUCKED THE HONEY OF HIS
MUSIC VOWS,/NOW SEE THAT THE NOBLE AND
MOST SOVEREIGN REASON/LIKE SWEET BELLS
JANGLED HARSH AND OUT OF TUNE.**

- About: Hamlet
- Speaker: Ophelia
- Context: Ophelia has just spoken to Hamlet and he has been quite harsh and rude with her. She is lamenting the fact that the Hamlet she knew is gone and that Hamlet is mad.

GO THY WAYS TO A NUNNERY. WHERE'S YOUR FATHER?

- About: Ophelia/Polonius
- Speaker: Hamlet
- Context: Hamlet is speaking with Ophelia as a part of Polonius's trap. He speaks very negatively about Ophelia and women in general and tells her to go to a nunnery. He then asks about her father because he suspects that they're being spied on. What follows is Ophelia's one lie in the play, that he's at home.

WHO WERE THE MONARCHS WHEN SHAKESPEARE WAS ALIVE? THEIR REIGNS?

- Elizabeth I (1533 -1603)
- James VI/I (1603-1625)

HOW MANY PLAYS DID HE WRITE? HOW MANY SONNETS? WHAT OTHER PLAYS DO YOU KNOW?

- 37 plays
- 154 sonnets
- Romeo and Juliet, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Macbeth, Othello, Taming of the Shrew, A Winter's Tale, Much Ado About Nothing, The Tempest, Twelfth Night, A Comedy of Errors, Henry VIII, Julius Caesar, etc, etc.

WHAT KIND OF WRITING DID HE USE FOR NOBLE CHARACTERS? FOR LOW?

- Noble characters: verse
- Low: prose

WHAT DID RHYME INDICATE?

- Rhyme meant generally that something important had happened: a character entrance, close of scenes, important action, change of mood, etc.

WHAT IS HAMLET BASED OFF OF?

- It was derived from the legend of Amleth, a figure in medieval Scandinavian legend, which was recorded by 13th century chronicler Saxo Grammaticus.

WHERE IS HAMLET SET?

- Denmark

CHARACTER FOILS IN THE PLAY

- Hamlet/Laertes
- Hamlet/Fortinbras
- Horatio/Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
- Claudius/King Hamlet
- Gertrude/Ophelia

THE GHOST

- The ghost is supposed to be Hamlet's dead father.
- Marcellus, Bernardo, Horatio, Hamlet.
- It says that Hamlet must get revenge for his murder. Claudius, the ghost's brother, killed Hamlet sr while he was napping in an orchard by putting poison in his ear. It urges Hamlet into action.
- It appears in the first act and in the fourth act.
- It initially appears in armour, but later appears how it was dressed in life.

HAMLET'S MADNESS

- It came on after Hamlet spoke with the ghost.
- Polonius thought it was lovesickness.
- Gertrude thought it was grief and her too hasty marriage.
- Claudius thought it was fake and that Hamlet was dangerous.
- Hamlet initially was acting, but there were some moments of real madness within the play.

THE MOUSE-TRAP

- Originally called "The Murder of Gonzago."
- Hamlet called it "The Mouse-Trap"
- It mimicked the real life murder of Hamlet's father as the ghost described it to Hamlet.
- The purpose was to help Hamlet discover if Claudius felt guilty based on his reaction.

HAMLET'S FRIENDS

- Horatio was a true friend to Hamlet.
- Rosencrantz and Guildenstern pretended to be Hamlet's friends, but he was friends with them when they were young.
- Laertes was never really Hamlet's friend. They are of similar ages but more rivals than anything.

OPHELIA

- Ophelia starts out as a sweet, young girl who is kind, loyal, and true. She is obedient to her father and brother and a genuine person.
- She was Hamlet's lover, Polonius's daughter, Laertes's sister.
- She was a foil for Gertrude and a tool used by Polonius.
- After Polonius was killed, she went mad. Then she fell into the river and floated along until her clothing was soaked with water and dragged her down so that she drowned.

GERTRUDE

- Gertrude is the queen. She cares for her son and loved her deceased husband. She got remarried to Claudius not long after the death of her husband. She seems to be somewhat easily manipulated/convinced. She wants what's best for her family.
- Hamlet's mother, Hamlet Sr's widow, Claudius's wife, Queen of Denmark
- Her role was to be the queen who married to soon and helped raise Hamlet's ire. She is potentially involved in King Hamlet's murder but later it is determined she is innocent.
- At the end of the play, during Hamlet's duel with Laertes, she drinks the poisoned glass of wine intended for Hamlet. She died.

HAMLET

- Hamlet is depressed, dark, and mopey. He mourns the death of his father and his mother's remarriage deeply. He is obsessed with death and decay and setting things right in Denmark after he speaks to his father's ghost. He wears dark colours and likes to talk a lot.
- Hamlet Sr and Gertrude's son, Claudius's nephew, Ophelia's lover, Laertes's rival, Polonius's source of obsession, Horatio's friend, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's mission.
- His role in the play is the protagonist and title character. He is the tragic hero upon which the action of the play is carried.
- He fights Laertes in a fixed duel at the end of the play. He is cut by a poisoned sword and eventually dies.

WHAT WAS CLAUDIUS'S ORIGINAL CRIME?

- He killed his brother, King Hamlet.
- He snuck out to where his brother was sleeping and poured poison in his brother's ear to kill him.

WHO DID HAMLET KILL?

- Polonius: directly, stabbed while Polonius was eavesdropping behind a tapestry.
- Claudius: directly, stabbed with a poison sword and forced to drink poisoned wine during the duel after Hamlet discovered his treachery.
- Laertes: directly, Hamlet cut him with a sword laced in poison though Hamlet didn't know the poison was there.
- Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: indirectly, Hamlet escaped the ship bound for England which would have brought him to his death and left letters for them to be killed upon arrival to England.
- Ophelia: indirectly, Hamlet killed her father which drove her mad and eventually caused her to drown. This one is a bit more of a stretch, but you could argue it.

CLAUDIUS'S PLANS TO KILL HAMLET

- 1. Hamlet will be sent to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and some sealed letters. The sealed letters bid England to kill Hamlet upon his arrival. Claudius cannot do it himself because the people love Hamlet and would turn on him.
 - Hamlet escapes with pirates.
- 2. Laertes wants revenge for his father's murder, so he and Claudius concoct a plan. Hamlet and Laertes will have a mock duel. Laertes will dip his sword in an incurable poison so when he cuts Hamlet, Hamlet will die. As a back up plan, Claudius will lace a cup of wine with poison and bid Hamlet to drink from it.

THE LAST SCENE

- Hamlet fills Horatio in on his escape and on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's fate.
- Osric proposes a mock duel between Hamlet and Laertes. Hamlet agrees despite his misgivings, as he later confides in Horatio. Horatio bids him not to fight but Hamlet has given his word.
- Hamlet apologizes to Laertes and they fight. Hamlet gets the first hit and the king tries to get him to drink the poisoned wine. Hamlet says no. Then Gertrude drinks the wine.
- Hamlet gets cut by the poisoned sword and in a scuffle the swords get switched and Laertes gets cut too.
- Gertrude dies. Laertes confesses to the treachery. Hamlet kills the king by stabbing him and making him drink the wine.
- Laertes dies.
- Horatio wants to die. Hamlet tells him not to but to tell Hamlet's story. He names Fortinbras king. Hamlet dies.
- Horatio tells the story to Fortinbras and English ambassadors (who tell R+G are dead), and Fortinbras is presumably named king. Hamlet carried out with honours.

ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN

- School friends of Hamlet. Summoned by Claudius and Gertrude to investigate Hamlet's madness.
- They were not good friends to Hamlet. They were more wanting to get ahead in life and soaked up the king's approval and wanted to do well in his eyes.
- They acted as a foil for Horatio.
- They were sent to England. Hamlet escaped but switched out the letters they were bearing for ones that destined them to be put to death.

LAERTES

- Young man, noble, lived and studied in France. He was a good sword fighter and loyal to his family. He fought for what he believed in, but wanted revenge on Hamlet for Hamlet killing Polonius. Cared about his sister. Honourable.
- Polonius's son, Hamlet's foil/rival, Ophelia's brother.
- He acted as a foil for Hamlet and the instrument of Hamlet's demise.
- He got involved in a treacherous plan with Claudius and was killed during the duel with Hamlet by his own poisoned blade. At the end he forgave Hamlet and felt that his own treachery was justly served.

YORICK

- The court jester when Hamlet was young. Entertained the court and Hamlet. Died.
- Hamlet finds his skull in the graveyard and reflects on death.

HORATIO AND ELSINORE

- Horatio is a friend of Hamlet's from Wittenberg.
- Horatio has come to Elsinore for Hamlet's father's funeral.
- Hamlet thinks that Horatio has come for Hamlet's mother's wedding.