

Hamlet Projects

While reading and studying this play, you will complete the following activities to enhance your understanding and participation. All work is to be your own unless expressly permitted. You are NOT to use any secondary sources (works *about* the play, i.e. SparkNotes, articles, Websites, essays, etc. about *Hamlet*) or any other unauthorized assistance. If you do, you're missing the point and do not belong in this class.

Words, Words, Words

Create a medium for highlighting your ten (10) favorite lines out of the play. Copy the passage accurately. (See *MLA* for specific instructions on verse/poetry quotation usage and mechanics.) Make it **professional** and **engaging!**

- Document the act, scene, and line number/s within parentheses.
Ex. (1.5.78-9) indicates Act 1, scene 5, lines 78-79. (Use *MLA* documentation format.)
- Include a two-to-three sentence explanation as to why you chose each one—why it speaks or appeals to you—consider meaning, imagery, sound, metaphor, etc. Do NOT “translate.” Respond to it. And it helps, points-wise, not to be a member of the bare minimum club.
- Be as creative as you like!

Hamlet Notes

As we read the play, consider carefully the following questions, and note your observations, thoughts, insights, feelings, reactions, etc. to each idea throughout. Try to reserve final judgments until you have finished reading so that you can reflect on the entirety of the play and its outcomes before drawing all of your conclusions. Be prepared to write a two-page response for each with your conclusions and supporting evidence from the text. Take good notes—you will see these questions again!

- How does the Elizabethan concept of The Great Chain of Being resound throughout this play?
- Discuss the roles of women in this play. What conclusions could you draw on the treatment (in a literary sense) of women in *Hamlet*? In what lights does Shakespeare show them?
- How does Shakespeare treat issues of fathers and sons in *Hamlet*? Compare and contrast the several father-son relationships in this play.
- Is Hamlet legally insane (mad)? How do you know?
- Discuss the concepts of inaction/paralysis vs. impulsiveness and the role of revenge in this play.
- How is Hamlet a tragic hero? Consider carefully his thoughts & attitudes, words, actions, and relationships, and discuss the choices he makes and the rationales/motivations behind them. Use the text!
- To which character do you relate the most? Why? Quote a passage that best illustrates your connection and explain how it does so.

Literary Analysis—A *motif* is any recurring element in a work of art (literature, film, music, etc.) that, by its repetition, attains symbolic significance. Tracing a motif throughout a work (or collection of works) and analyzing its significance often points to thematic elements. Using the Exponential Approach to literary criticism (*exponent*—sign of a theme; in this case, your motif) you will be noting every reference to your team’s given motif—the “what.” Once you’ve gathered all your specific details, you and your team will then interpret and organize the collective data and draw conclusions that will reveal the “Big So What” (*theme*—a message about life/the human experience that the work as a whole communicates to the reader). Your ultimate goal is to write a scholarly essay, analyzing the overall thematic significance of your given topic’s recurring references throughout the play to present to the rest of the class.

Motifs: Identify all images of or references to (whether stated directly or implied) anything related to your team’s topic.

- Acting and Directing (any references to theater)
- Animals and Traps (fauna)
- Gardens and plants (flora)
- Money and Finance (any terminology you would hear in an economics class)
- Ears and Hearing
- Decay and Corruption (body, soul, spirit, political states, etc.)
- Truth and Indirection (“by indirection find direction out”)