**Hamlet study guides**

**On a separate sheet of paper completely answer each question**

**Act I, Scene i**

1. At what hour does the ghost first appear?

2. Who is prompted to address the ghost? Why is he selected for this task?

3. In what guise does the ghost appear? Describe the ghost’s appearance and attire.

4. Who is on watch to witness this specter?

5. What do we learn about the dead king and Norway? Be as specific as possible.

6. How many nights has the ghost appeared?

7. What political strife is underfoot and why? Who are the players involved? Be as specific

as possible.

8. Why does Horatio allude to Julius Caesar (line 126)? What inferences can be made based

on this reference?

9. What noise disturbs the ghost? Why might this noise have this effect on the spirit?

10. What do the watchmen do when the ghost refuses to speak the second time? Why might

this not be the wisest action?

11. Who have the watchmen now determined to entreat to conference with the ghostly

visage? Why have they selected this individual?

**Act I, Scene ii**

1. Explain the line, spoken by King Claudius: “Our sometime sister, now our queen” (I.ii.8).

2. What, according to Claudius, has prompted Young Fortinbras to act now?

3. Where are Voltemand and Cornelius sent? Why?

4. Who is Laertes? What does Laertes request of King Claudius?

5. Explain the line, spoken by young Hamlet: “A little more than kin, and less than kind” (I.ii.67).

6. What does Claudius implore Hamlet to cast off? Why?

7. What does Hamlet desire to do which Claudius would prefer that he not pursue?

8. How long has King Hamlet been dead?

9. What does the line, spoken by young Hamlet, “Or that the Everlasting had not fixed / His

cannon ‘gainst self-slaughter!” (I.ii.135-136) suggest about his state of mind?

10. What action of Gertrude’s makes Hamlet say, “Frailty thy name is woman” (I.ii.149)?

11. Why do you think that Hamlet believes he must “hold his tongue” (I.ii.162)?

12. What news does Horatio bring his friend Hamlet?

13. What favor does Hamlet ask of Horatio and the watchmen after they have recounted their tale to him?

**Act I scene iii**

1. Who is Ophelia to Laertes, Polonius, and to Hamlet?

2. Why does Laertes caution Ophelia about her love for Prince Hamlet?

3. What brotherly concern does Laertes have about Ophelia’s honor?

4. What fatherly advice does Polonius give Laertes? List as many lessons as Polonius imparts.

5. How does Polonius advise Ophelia to conduct herself regarding Prince Hamlet?

***Act II***

**Scene 1:**

1. Polonius sends Reynaldo to be sure Laertes is behaving properly while away at school. What exactly does Polonius instruct Reynaldo to do?
2. What has frightened Ophelia?
3. What do Polonius and Ophelia believe has driven Hamlet mad?
4. To whom does Polonius plan to report Hamlet’s behavior?

**Scene 2:**

1. Claudius sends for Hamlet’s school friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. What does he want them to do (to which they agree)?
2. Why does Gertrude insist that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern see Hamlet immediately?
3. What does Gertrude believe to be the cause of Hamlet’s madness?
4. What assurances do Voltemand and Cornelius bring back from their mission to Norway?
5. What does the King of Norway request of Claudius (which he agrees to later in the play)?
6. What does Hamlet’s letter to Ophelia seem to reveal?
7. What does Hamlet tell Rosencrantz and Guildenstern he feels like living in Denmark?
8. Who has arrived in Denmark?
9. What does Hamlet tell his two friends about his “so-called” madness?
10. In what way do the players make Hamlet feel bad about his own inaction?
11. What is the name of the play Hamlet wants the players to perform?
12. In what way will Hamlet modify this play?
13. What action has Hamlet decided to take? Why does he think this action is necessary
14. What might be true of the Ghost according to Hamlet

**Hamlet Act II Diary Entry Writing Assignment**

Write a diary as if you were Hamlet. This must be written in the first person narrative.

You will need to have at least five entries:

Entries should address the following concerns:

- The death of your father

- The remarriage of your mother

- Your plans so far to avenge the murder of your father

- Your feelings for Ophelia

- Any other concerns young Hamlet might have

You need to include at least three of the following literary devices in your diary entries: *Allusion, analogy, Imagery, Irony (verbal), Paradox, Personification, Pun, Oxymoron, Hyperbole, or Understatement*. You will need to **underline each device and in parenthesis, identify the type of device you used**. (If you are not familiar with these terms, they are defined in the back of your English 11 textbook, pp. 1295-1328 “Handbook of Literary terms”)

Your diary is to be either **neatly** handwritten, skipping lines and written on one side of the paper or typed, Times New Roman in 10 point font, skipping lines on one side of the paper’s page.

**Hamlet**

**Study Questions**

**Act III, Scene i**

1. What do Claudius's lines (56-61 on page 127) reveal about his conscience?\_

2. What is Hamlet essentially debating the merits of in his "To be, or not to be" soliloquy?\_\_

3. How does Hamlet describe himself to Ophelia when he is discussing the flaws of

humanity?\_\_

4. Is the King convinced by Hamlet's apparent madness due to love? Explain your answer.\_\_

5. Where will Claudius send Hamlet? Why?\_\_

6. What is Polonius's plan to make sure that Hamlet is not just love-struck mad? What will Polonius's role be in the plan?

**Act III, Scene 2**

1. What does Hamlet believe he has learned by watching Claudius's reaction to the play?

**Act III, Scene 3**

1. What new task has Claudius set for Rosencranz and Guildenstern? Why?

2. What does Claudius soliloquy (lines 40 - 75) reveal about his character?

3. Why does Hamlet decide not to kill Claudius when he comes upon his step-father in this

scene? Explain

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**Act III, Scene 4**

1. What prompts Polonius to make the noise that reveals his hiding place?

2. Who does Hamlet think he is stabbing when he mistakenly kills Polonius?

3. What, essentially, is Hamlet saying to his mother in this scene?

4. What really makes Gertrude think that her son is mad?

5. What does Hamlet request that Gertrude do in terms of her marriage?

6. Do you think that Hamlet has influenced Gertrude by the end of the scene? Explain your

answer.

**Act 4 Study Guide**

1. What new task does Claudius assign to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in scene 1?

2. What does Hamlet mean when he calls Rosencrantz a sponge in scene 2?

3. As revealed in scene 3, what does Claudius intend for Hamlet and how does he plan for

this to be accomplished?

4. What new plot complication is revealed in scene 4?

5. How does Ophelia behave in scene 5? Why?

6. Describe Laertes's entrance in scene 5. What does he want? Why?

7. Hamlet and Laertes act as foil characters [characters that face similar circumstances but

who react differently]. Compare the reactions and actions of these two sons to the news of

their fathers' deaths. Be specific.

8. What news does Hamlet's letter to Horatio reveal in scene 6?

9. What is essentially said in the conversation between Laertes and Claudius in scene 7?

What is Claudius's new plan? How is Claudius using Laertes?

10. What news does Gertrude bring about Ophelia?