

Campus and Community Engagement at Texas Performing Arts Pre-Performance Activity Guide



The World's Fastest Hamlet



Tuesday, January 31, 2012

At Del Valle High School
Performed by
Austin Shakespeare



Lesson Summary:

- Recognize the unique writing style used by Shakespeare
- Read a summary of Shakespeare's "Hamlet"
- Identify figurative language in "Hamlet" and determine contemporary translations
- Compare "Hamlet" to modern works of literature or film
- Compose an analytical essay in response to prompts
- Think critically about the overarching themes presented in "Hamlet"

Correlating Standards (TEKS):

§110.33. English Language Arts and Reading, English III

- (2) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Theme and Genre. Students analyze, make inferences and draw conclusions about theme and genre in different cultural, historical, and contemporary contexts and provide evidence from the text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:
- (A) analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on the human condition;
 - (B) relate the characters and text structures of mythic, traditional, and classical literature to 20th and 21st century American novels, plays, or films.
- (5) Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Fiction. Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of fiction and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to:
- (A) evaluate how different literary elements (e.g., figurative language, point of view) shape the author's portrayal of the plot and setting in works of fiction.
- (15) Writing/Expository Texts. Students write expository texts to communicate ideas and information to specific audiences for specific purposes. Students are expected to:
- (A) write an analytical essay of sufficient length that includes:
 - (i) effective introductory and concluding paragraphs and a variety of sentence structures;
 - (ii) rhetorical devices, and transitions between paragraphs;
 - (iii) a clear thesis statement or controlling idea;
 - (iv) a clear organizational schema for conveying ideas;
 - (v) relevant and substantial evidence and well-chosen details.
- (18) Oral and Written Conventions/Handwriting, Capitalization, and Punctuation. Students write legibly and use appropriate capitalization and punctuation conventions in their compositions. Students are expected to correctly and consistently use conventions of punctuation and capitalization.
- (19) Oral and Written Conventions/Spelling. Students spell correctly. Students are expected to spell correctly, including using various resources to determine and check correct spellings.

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The Writing of "Hamlet"



William Shakespeare wrote "Hamlet" in the early 17th Century. The first performance was in July of 1602. "Hamlet" is considered one of Shakespeare's most famous tragedies. A **tragedy** is a story in which the protagonist (main character) is liked and admired by the audience but has one major personality flaw that causes his downfall.

Shakespeare is known for a unique writing style, as demonstrated in "Hamlet." He uses **blank verse** (the lines of the play do not rhyme) composed in iambic pentameter. **Iambic pentameter** consists of ten syllables to a line, spoken with a stress on every second syllable.

One of Shakespeare's more famous quotes as an example: "If *music be the food of love, play on.*"

Try to write your own sentence using iambic pentameter (a total of ten syllables).

Figurative Language

Shakespeare used many forms of figurative language in "Hamlet," specifically metaphors and personification. Listen for phrases throughout the play that convey various themes, including revenge, insanity, and sadness.

- *Metaphor*: comparing two things to show a likeness between them
- *Personification*: giving an object a human quality

What is the meaning in each of Shakespeare's figures of speech?

"Give thy thoughts
no tongue."

"I am sick at heart."

"In my mind's eye..."

"Now cracks a
noble heart."

"When sorrows come,
they come not as single
spies but in battalions."

Making Connections

Shakespeare's "Hamlet" has often been compared to 20th and 21st Century novels, plays, or movies. Think about the plot, characters, and overarching themes in "Hamlet." What modern novel, play, or movie would you compare it to? Why?

Timed Writing

You will write an analytical essay in response to one of the following prompts. Use the space below to brainstorm what you will say in your essay, then complete the essay on a sheet of notebook paper. Remember to write clearly and legibly with correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Your essay should include:

- An introduction with a clear thesis statement
- At least two paragraphs with evidence and details that support your thesis statement
- A conclusion that restates your thesis statement in a different way
- At least two rhetorical devices
- Transitions between paragraphs



Writing Prompts

In the play, the ghost of Hamlet's father roams Elsinore Castle. Do you believe in the supernatural? Explain.

Hamlet's mother and uncle send two friends to check on his strange behaviors. Do parents have the right to "spy" or check up on their children? What circumstances might allow this?

Hamlet spends much of the play devising a plan to kill Claudius. Does Hamlet have the right to seek revenge against Claudius given the situation? Why or why not?

Themes in "Hamlet"

Pretend you are a psychologist and Hamlet has come in for a therapy session. On a separate sheet of paper, write the dialogue between you and Hamlet as if he has just experienced one of the following events. Towards the end of his therapy session, explain to him which feeling you believe he is struggling with.

- Hamlet's mother marries his uncle.
- The ghost of Hamlet's father tells Hamlet to seek revenge on Claudius.
- Hamlet accidentally kills Polonius and is sent away to England.
- Hamlet's love interest, Ophelia, drowns in the river.

Feelings

Love

Hate

Sorrow

Loneliness

Guilt

Anger

Information on this worksheet gathered from:

<http://us.penguin.com/static/pages/classics/readingguides.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare

HAMLET SUMMARY PREZI SCREENS

by Rachel Richards

http://prezi.com/h_fm6vmbts0f/the-worlds-fastest-hamlet/



"Hamlet" was...

- One of William Shakespeare's 37 plays
- Written in 1600 or 1601
- First performed in July of 1602

The Setting:

- Late sixteenth century
- Elsinore Castle in Denmark

The Main Characters

Hamlet



Claudius



Gertrude

- Title: The Prince of Denmark
- Family: son of Queen Gertrude and the late King Hamlet, and the nephew of the present King Claudius
- Character: Tragic, depressed, poetic, and confused

- Title: The King of Denmark
- Family: Hamlet's uncle, new husband of Queen Gertrude, brother of the late King Hamlet
- Character: Tragic, calculating and ambitious, driven by his lust for power

- Title: The Queen of Denmark
- Family: Hamlet's mother, recently married to King Claudius
- Character: Tragic, shallow and weak; seeks affection and status

1

On a dark summer night, a ghost roams the grounds of Elsinore Castle. The ghost is discovered by Hamlet, Hamlet's best friend. Hamlet thinks the ghost looks like Hamlet's deceased father.

Something is not quite right...

2

Hamlet is shocked to see his father's ghost. He is told to avenge his father's death by killing Claudius.

3

Hamlet is shocked to see his father's ghost. He is told to avenge his father's death by killing Claudius.

4

Polonius, the Lord Chamberlain, suggests that Hamlet may be in love with his daughter, Ophelia. Claudius agrees to spy on Hamlet in conversation with the girl. The Hamlet does not appear to be in love with Ophelia.

Polonius is a bit of a snob...

Hamlet is a bit of a snob...

5

Hamlet is shocked to see his father's ghost. He is told to avenge his father's death by killing Claudius.

That father who set us here...

6

Hamlet goes to his room to spend some time in thought.

"To be or not to be: that is the question."

7

Hamlet is shocked to see his father's ghost. He is told to avenge his father's death by killing Claudius.

Hamlet is a bit of a snob...

8

Polonius, the Lord Chamberlain, suggests that Hamlet may be in love with his daughter, Ophelia. Claudius agrees to spy on Hamlet in conversation with the girl. The Hamlet does not appear to be in love with Ophelia.

9

Hamlet is shocked to see his father's ghost. He is told to avenge his father's death by killing Claudius.

10

Polonius's son, Laertes, who has been studying in France, returns to Denmark in a rage after hearing about his father's and sister's deaths. Claudius convinces him that Hamlet is no threat.

"Remember to be honest."

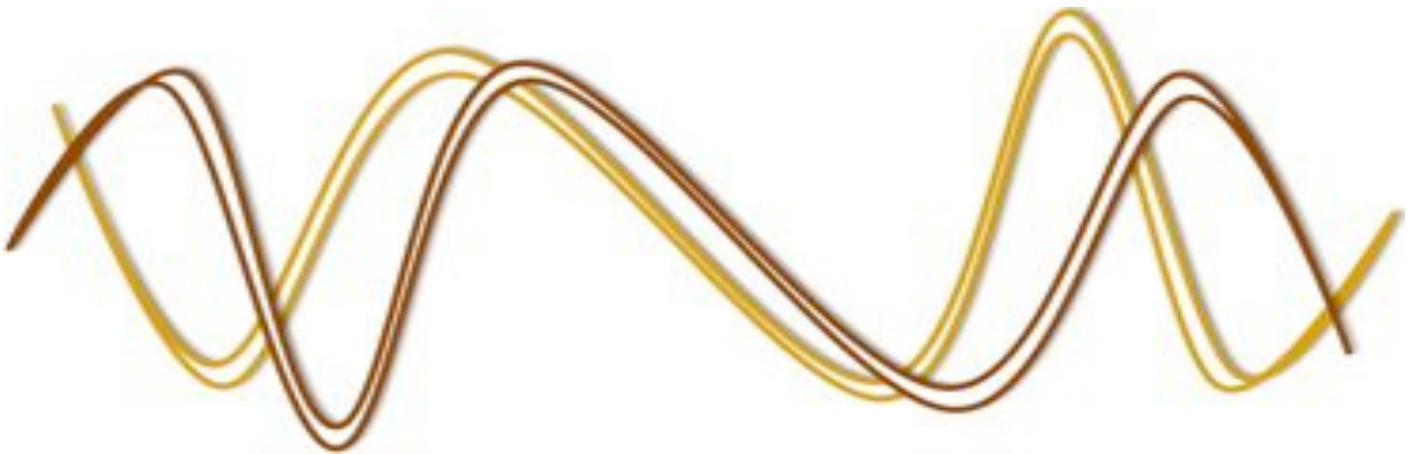
11

Polonius's son, Laertes, who has been studying in France, returns to Denmark in a rage after hearing about his father's and sister's deaths. Claudius convinces him that Hamlet is no threat.

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