

## TEST and TIMED ESSAY REVIEW

**Trace the transformation of Hamlet through the play—list major actions and shifts from moral legitimacy to corruption and back again.**

Act I

Act II

Act III

Act IV

Act V

**Think about the major characters and their roles/relationships with Hamlet:**

|         |          |            |                              |         |
|---------|----------|------------|------------------------------|---------|
| Ghost   | Claudius | Gertrude   | Ophelia                      | Laertes |
| Horatio | Polonius | Fortinbras | Rosencrantz and Guildenstern |         |

**Consider the following thematic ideas and motifs found throughout the play. Come up with specific incidents that reveal these throughout the play:**

- Disease/corruption and the need for cleansing (sickness, rotting, unweeded garden)
- Human capacity for evil (original sin—who is not guilty?)
- Revenge/punishment
- Wrestling with morality/religion
- Death as an equalizer (earth, dirt, worms, decay)
- Fear of the unknown (nature of the ghost, death)
- Locus of control—internal or external/divine (can we control our own fate?)
- Truth in “lies” or “faking” (actors, insanity, puns) “...catch the conscience of a king.”
- Madness—fake? real? does it matter?
- Hiding/spying/sneaking to find the truth
- Misogyny (“Frailty, thy name is woman!”)
- Manipulation—using others purely for one’s own purpose (recorders, sponges, organs)
- Ears/rumors—things that are heard are not as reliable as those that are seen
- Decisive action vs. contemplation (Laertes/Fortinbras vs. Hamlet)
- Betrayal (Gertrude to Hamlet Sr., Hamlet to Ophelia, Claudius to Gertrude, R&G)
- Guilt by association (Polonius, Gertrude, Ophelia)
- Pregnant elements (thoughts, women)

More...

**Structural elements:**

-Play is cyclical

- Ghost in the beginning—death in the end
- Horatio tells stories in the beginning—he tells Hamlet’s story in the end
- Preparation for war in the beginning—take over (ironically peaceful) in the end
- Political issues in the beginning, personal in the middle, political again in the end

-Play within a play (“Mousetrap”)—propels theme of finding truth in acting/faking

-Songs throughout