



Hamlet

teacher guide for studying the play and
attending Southwest Shakespeare's performance
January 2006

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Dear Educator:

We are excited and honored that you have chosen to bring your students to see Southwest Shakespeare's production of *Hamlet*. We know that your students will benefit from studying this play in your classroom and seeing it performed on our stage.

Many students and teachers often feel anxiety when it comes to Shakespeare: seeing it, reading it, and especially teaching it. One of the goals of Southwest Shakespeare is to demystify Shakespeare, take him "off the shelf," and re-energize his work for students as well as teachers. Keeping this in mind, this study guide was created to provide educators with a variety of tools to both allay their own concerns and to expand their students' experience with *Hamlet* both before and after seeing the stage performance.

We hope you find the enclosed information, activities, and resources helpful in your endeavor to bring Shakespeare to life for your students. If you have any suggestions for activities or topics not already found in this study guide, please feel free to contact me via e-mail at lewandowski.angee@chandler.k12.az.us or phone at (480) 510-3808. We are always interested in hearing new ways to excite young people (and teachers!) about Shakespeare and live theatre.

Happy teaching!

Angee Lewandowski
SSC Education Committee Chair

Comments from the Director

These comments can be used to help you prepare your students to see Southwest Shakespeare Company's performance of *Hamlet* and may also answer any questions about changes or modifications made to the stage performance as compared to the written play.

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of Production: | <i>Hamlet</i> |
| Name of Director: | Jared Sakren |
| In what time period is this production set? | 1540s (roughly the same time period as originally envisioned by the playwright) |
| Is this switched from the original text? | Not by much. Hamlet, the protagonist, is attending Wittenberg University, the site of Martin Luther's work and famous writings that began the Reformation. The influence of these writings, and the Reformation in general, has great bearing on the issues in the play, so we wanted to locate the story around this time period. |
| Have any characters been cut? Why? | Yes, because they were extraneous and/or superfluous to the story or added unnecessary stage time or dialogue that could decrease the audience's enjoyment of the performance. |
| Have any characters been added? | No. |
| Have any characters been combined into one? | No. |
| Is there any cross-gender casting? | No. |
| Have any scenes been cut? Why? | Partially, due to a scene involving the superfluous character, Reynaldo, which did nothing to further the plot. |
| Have any scenes been added? | No. |
| Are there fight scenes? | Yes. |
| Stage blood? | A tiny bit of blood may be used, if at all. We are considering this at the moment. |
| Weapons? | Yes. Rapiers, daggers, halberds, spears, and truncheons. |
| Are there love scenes? | Not in the usual sense. |
| Sexual innuendo? | There are some sexual undertones but nothing overt or added to the text. Hamlet's scenes with Ophelia and his mother have some sexual tension underlying them and some secondary symbolism, though they do not involve explicit sexuality. The language itself contains some sexual imagery that forms the basis for this. Also, Claudius is very affectionate toward his new bride, Gertrude, though it is in the nature of what might be expected of newlyweds. |
| Final Comments: | The themes in this play require some maturity on the part of the audience. It is, after all, a tragedy, and involves a man who kills his brother and marries his brother's wife (his sister-in-law). It also involves the ghost of the dead King, some graphic language regarding all of this, and stage violence wherein several characters end up dead. On the other hand, the play is deeply moral and spends most of the time discussing issues such as what is right and wrong, what it means to be fully human, forgiveness and redemption, and many other themes and issues that rise to the highest level of poetry and language. |

Helpful Tips for Seeing & Exploring Shakespeare

To Read or to See the Play?

"The printed word can't convey the undertone and nuances of speech. For that, you need to hear a gifted actor. Inflection reveals at once whether a speaker is ironic, genuine, sad, or funny. Irony, for instance, is mainly conveyed through inflection and facial expression.

"On the other hand, reading a play alone allows you to proceed at your own pace, giving you time to dwell on poetry and the complex images that might fly right by you if they were only heard."

Norrie Epstein

"Just plunge right in

(to Shakespeare). See a play, read it aloud, rent a video, listen to a tape.

It's up to you.

When you look at Shakespeare close up, he's not as intimidating as when he's seen from afar."

Norrie Epstein, author
The Friendly Shakespeare



"If a play is performed right by those who are properly trained, after about twenty minutes

you won't be aware of the language because the human story is so strong."

David Suchet, actor

"Reading Shakespeare is

sometimes like looking through a window into a dark room.

You don't see in.

You see nothing but

a reflection of yourself,

unable to get in.

An unflattering

image of yourself blind."

Antony Sher, actor

Eighteenth-century critics complained that Shakespeare's tragedies weren't consistently serious enough. According to the classic rules, tragedy should be uniformly sober. Shakespeare's use of humor in his tragedies prevents us from becoming washed away in a dense fog of emotions. Rather, it forces us out of the "tragic" long enough to appreciate the level to which the play's passions have taken us.

Discussion Questions

- Did the production look like what you imagined as you read the play? How was it similar? Different?
- Which actor best portrayed his/her character? Why?
- How was the production different from the written drama? What decisions did the director make about staging? Were these effective decisions? Why or why not?
- What did you think of the production values (sets, costumes, lighting)? Did they help you to better understand the plot of the play?

Hamlet - An Introduction

*I have a story, that is often told,
Of a Prince named Hamlet, from days of old.
His troubled mind, we shall explore,
As I take you now to Elsinore.*

-- *Hamlet: For Kids* by Lois Burdett

"To be, or not to be? That is the question—" is undoubtedly the most famous line from any play in the English language. Even students who would claim that they know NOTHING about Shakespeare (and don't want to know anything, thank you very much!) recognize these words. *Hamlet* is undoubtedly Shakespeare's most famous, most written about, and definitely most complex play. Various interpretations can be found for just about any aspect of this play as well as an infinite number of themes: vengeance, corruption, and immorality, just to name a few. But what truly makes it such an intricate play is its protagonist, who must grapple with finding his own true nature and examining what motivates him to feel, to believe, and ultimately commit himself to act upon. And it is these intricacies that inspire directors, actors, critics, psychologists, teachers, and students to be fascinated with Hamlet, both the character and the play itself.



And even though Shakespeare created his greatest tragic figure in Hamlet, he also created supporting characters who are equally as fascinating: a jealous uncle capable of murdering his own brother; an enigmatic mother whose motives are never entirely clear; a beautiful love-interest who is driven to madness; a loyal friend who must remain behind to tell Hamlet's sad story ... the list goes on and on. These characters capture our interest and hold our attention long after the curtains have shut on the final scene.

Hamlet is a unique achievement. Shakespeare not only used over 600 words unique to this play, he contributed more new words to the entire English language with the writing of *Hamlet* than any other playwright before or since. It has been performed more than any other play in the world, and more has been written about it than any other literary work. It has inspired twenty-six ballets, six operas, and dozens of musical works. At over 4,000 lines long (with 1,530 of them spoken by Hamlet himself), it is Shakespeare's longest play; the uncut version takes four and a half to five hours to perform. And with that most famous of lines (it has been said that "To be, or not to be" is the most quoted phrase in the English language), *Hamlet* is part of our collective psyche.

Critic's Corner

"Hamlet at once invites and resists interrogation. He is, more than any theatrical character before and perhaps since, a figure constructed around an unseen or secret core. Such a figure in the theatre is something of a paradox, since all that exists of any character on stage is what is seen and heard there. But from his place onstage at the center of a courtly world in which he is 'the observed of all observers' and hence a person allowed virtually no privacy, Hamlet insists that he has 'that within which passeth show.' What is it that he has 'within'?"

Stephen Greenblatt
Introduction to the *Norton Shakespeare Hamlet*

"When people ask,
'Why do *Hamlet*?'
I say ... I don't know.

I have to.
It's funny. It's marvelous.
It's ridiculous.
It's meaningful.
It's meaningless."

Kenneth Branagh,
actor & director

Hamlet – Sources & History

Most likely written around 1600, *Hamlet* is regarded as a milestone in Shakespeare's dramatic development. He achieved artistic maturity in this play through his perceptive depiction of the hero's struggle between moral integrity and the need to avenge his father's murder.

One source for Shakespeare's play is a story recorded by the thirteenth-century Danish monk Saxo Grammaticus in *Historia Danica* (*History of Denmark*). This tale is about a pre-Viking prince called Amleth. "Amleth" means "dim-witted," which is a reference to the prince's insanity; he pretended to be mad to protect himself from Feng, his uncle, who had killed Horwendil, Amleth's father (according to Viking tradition, if you killed a madman, his soul would fly into your own). However, Grammaticus's version does not mention the Ghost, the players, the play-within-the-play, Ophelia's madness and death, or Laertes.



Another possible source for Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is Francois de Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*. This version of the story alludes that some of the blame for the king's murder may belong to Gertrude's flirtations with her brother-in-law. Belleforest describes Amleth as being overly melancholy, and the author debates the rightness of Amleth's passionate desire for vengeance.

Finally, the most likely source of Shakespeare's version is the *ur-Hamlet* (or "original Hamlet"), a play that was popular in London in the 1580s (Thomas Kyd possibly wrote the *ur-Hamlet*). Although the play is lost, there are references to this play that do exist which shows evidence that it included the Ghost who requests Hamlet to avenge his murder.

Hamlet first appeared in print in the *First Quarto* (known as Q1), which was prepared from actors' memories and rehearsal scripts that included only the individual actor's cues and lines. The *First Folio* edition, published in 1623, included some differences such as passages cut from Q2, the modernization of some words that the editors considered out of date, and included lines that seemed to be actors' ad-libs rather than Shakespeare's lines. Modern editors usually use Q2 because it is closest to Shakespeare's text.

The first performance of *Hamlet* is believed to be that of the Chamberlain's Men in 1600 (although the Player's dialogue with Hamlet about the child actors is a direct reference to actual competition between rival theatre companies in the spring of 1601; this scene might have been added at a later date). Richard Burbage was the first Hamlet, and it is alleged that Shakespeare himself played the Ghost in the original production.

How to Play Hamlet

"You can play it standing, sitting, lying down, or if you insist, kneeling. You can have a hangover. You can be cold sober. You can be hungry, overfed, or have just fought with your wife. It makes no difference as regards your stance or mood ...

"Why, one night in London, after I had been over-served with Scotch at the home of—never mind her name—I got halfway through my "To be" soliloquy when it became expedient to heave-ho, and quickly. I sidled off to the nearest folds of the stage draperies and played storm-at-sea. I then resumed the soliloquy.

"After the performance, one of the fine gentlemen who had sponsored me for membership in the Garrick Club confided: 'I say, Barrymore, that was the most daring and perhaps the most effective innovation ever offered. I refer to your deliberate pausing in the midst of the soliloquy to retire, almost, from the scene. May I congratulate you upon such an imaginative business? You seemed quite distraught. But it was effective!'

"To which I replied, 'Yes, I felt slightly overcome myself.'"

John Barrymore, actor

Act-By-Act Writing Topics

Act I

- What is happening politically in Denmark and Norway that is the cause of the “strict and most observant watch” that Marcellus speaks of to Horatio? How do you think this will be significant later in the play?
- You are Horatio. Write an entry in your journal describing the two encounters you had with the ghost. Do you think it is the ghost of Hamlet’s father? What do you think the ghost told Hamlet when they spoke alone? Do you think you can keep your promise to “never to speak of this that you have seen”?
- Contrast the attitudes towards the death of Old Hamlet as expressed by Claudius and Hamlet. How does this tie into the theme of reality versus appearance?
- Consider the advice that Laertes gives to Ophelia as compared to the advice that Polonius gives to Laertes. Do you think either man follows his own advice? Explain.
- Polonius gives Laertes a great deal of “fatherly advice.” Look at this passage and find advice you have heard from your own parents/guardians. How valuable is this advice? Have you used it? Have you been involved in any situation in which this advice was useful?

Act II

- To what extent do parents have the right to “spy” or check up on their children? What circumstances might allow or prevent this?
- Polonius makes plans to spy on Laertes, and Claudius makes plans to spy on Hamlet. Compare these two plans. First, explain the reasons why each is spying, then compare their methods, and finally, compare the ways in which each man’s judgment is flawed.
- What do Rosencrantz and Guildenstern agree to do? Do you think they are betraying Hamlet? Why do you think that they agree to what Claudius and Gertrude ask them to do? And then why do they tell Hamlet about what the King and Queen asked them to do?
- How does Hamlet think the players will help him to discover if Claudius is actually guilty of killing Old Hamlet?
- You are Rosencrantz. Write a letter to a friend at Wittenberg University about your visit to Elsinore. Describe why you came, what you have found, how you feel about it, and what you are planning to do.
- Write an entry in Claudius’s journal about how you are feeling after watching the play.

Act III

- Study Hamlet's famous soliloquy in Act III, Scene 1. What exactly is his view on suicide? Consider the lines that suggest suicide is tempting as well as the lines that discuss why Hamlet thinks people decide not to kill themselves. At this point in the play, why do you think Hamlet chooses to continue living although life can be painful, cruel, and unjust?
- Hamlet first says to Ophelia, "I did love you once," and then a few lines later tells her, "I loved you not." Is this inconsistency part of his scheme to appear insane? Is he trying to make Ophelia not care for him anymore so that she won't be hurt later when he might have to face the consequences of killing Claudius? What do you think Hamlet's true feelings are for Ophelia?
- Read the lines in Scene 1 where Hamlet repeatedly tells Ophelia to "get thee to a nunnery." In Shakespeare's time, "nunnery" could mean either a convent or a brothel. Which meaning do you think Hamlet is suggesting? Why do you think this?
- Claudius states, "Madness in great ones must not unwatched go." How is this true in modern times? What evidence can you find in recent news stories to support this statement? How do societies keep checks and balances on their "great ones"?
- As Ophelia, write a letter to a friend describing the discussions between you and Hamlet when you tried to return his gifts and then during the play. How do you feel about Hamlet now? What do you think will happen to your relationship?
- As Claudius, write a soliloquy describing your reaction to the play and how you are going to deal with Hamlet now that you know he suspects you of killing Old Hamlet.
- When Hamlet confronts Gertrude about marrying Claudius so soon after Old Hamlet's death, he hears a noise behind the tapestry, and runs his sword through it, killing Polonius: "How now, a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead!" Hamlet seems to think it is Claudius he killed when he says, "Is it the king?," but this seems unlike because just moments before he had left Claudius praying in another part of the castle. Also, this seems to be a rather hasty action for the hesitant Hamlet. Do you think Hamlet really thought it was Claudius, Polonius, or someone else? Explain your answer.
- Why do you think Gertrude married Claudius so soon after Old Hamlet's death? Do you think she has truly changed her mind about Claudius after her discussion with Hamlet?

Act IV

- How do you think Hamlet feels about murdering Polonius? His comments are humorous and thus seem disrespectful; for example, when Claudius asks him where Polonius is, Hamlet replies, "At supper ... not where he eats, but where he is eaten." Do you think he is remorseful but still trying to maintain acting as if he were insane? Or is he glad to be rid of one of Claudius's supporters? Explain your reasoning.
- Discuss the possible meanings of Ophelia's song lyrics. What do they suggest about her relationship with Hamlet and her grief for her father (especially as the causes for her insanity)?
- Outline the way Claudius tries to manipulate the following characters to achieve his own goals: Gertrude, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet, and Laertes.

Act V

- Discuss the professions of love and grief expressed at Ophelia's funeral by Laertes and Hamlet. What does this scene show us about Hamlet's true feelings for Ophelia?
- How does Hamlet seem to feel about causing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's deaths? Do you think that they deserved to die?
- As he is dying, Hamlet asks Horatio to "report me and my cause aright," in order to let people know why he acted the way he did. However, Horatio tries to drink from the poisoned cup, and Hamlet has to force it away from him. Why do you think Horatio wants to die?

Literary Analysis Topics

1. Throughout the play, Hamlet claims he is only pretending to be insane, but his portrayal of a madman is so intense and so convincing that many people who have seen or read the play believe that Shakespeare actually has Hamlet slip into insanity at certain moments in the play. Do you agree with this, or does Shakespeare intend Hamlet to merely pretend to be insane? What evidence can you give for either claim?
2. Consider Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's role in the play. Why might Shakespeare include characters such as these? Are they there for comic relief, or do they serve a more serious purpose? Is it acceptable for Hamlet to treat them the way he does? Why or why not?
3. Analyze the use of comedy in the play, paying particular attention to the gravediggers, Osric, and Polonius. Does comedy serve to simply relieve the tension of the tragedy, or do the comic scenes serve a more serious purpose as well?
4. Many critics argue that Hamlet's inability to take action and his tendency toward depression is a "tragic flaw" that inevitably leads to his demise. Is this an accurate way of interpreting the play? Why or why not? Given Hamlet's situation and personality, would another outcome of the play have been possible?
5. How does Shakespeare's repeated use of soliloquies and the overall cumulative effect of these speeches help the audience to feel sympathy for Hamlet?
6. How does Shakespeare keep his audience aware of developments outside the primary action of the play? For example, why are events on the ship that takes Hamlet to England not portrayed? Find other examples in the play where Shakespeare keeps his readers aware of important events, but does so without presenting the action on stage. Is this appropriate in your opinion? Why or why not?
7. Find examples of imagery that reveal decay or corruption. What effect do these images have on the reader? How would you explain Shakespeare's inclusion of these images in the play?
8. Explain what you think is revealed about human nature in *Hamlet*. Use characters and situations to illustrate your points.

Anticipation & Reaction Guide

Directions: Before seeing or reading the play *Hamlet*, rate the following statements. Compare your answers with a partner and discuss your reasons for how you rated each statement. After you have seen or finished reading the play, revisit the statements and see if your ratings have changed. Discuss with your partner why you did or did not change your ratings for each statement.

1
Disagree Strongly

2
Disagree

3
Agree

4
Agree Strongly

| Rating (BEFORE seeing/reading <i>Hamlet</i>) | Statement | Rating (AFTER seeing/reading <i>Hamlet</i>) |
|--|--|---|
| | You can tell if someone is lying if you watch the liar closely. | |
| | Hatred is a useless emotion. | |
| | Revenge is sometimes necessary. | |
| | You shouldn't feel guilty if a loved one commits suicide. | |
| | It is wrong to commit suicide. | |
| | It is wrong to kill someone, regardless of the reason. | |
| | Parents usually know what is best for you. | |
| | There is no such thing as pure evil; everyone has a conscience. | |
| | True friends are always loyal, even if they don't understand your actions. | |
| | Don't date someone who is out of your league because it will end in heartache. | |
| | Reading Shakespeare isn't fun because it is too difficult to understand. | |
| | I can relate to the characters and events in Shakespeare's plays. | |

After seeing/reading the play:

1. Did most of your ratings change or stay the same? Why?
2. What did you learn by completing the anticipation and reaction guide?

Appearance vs. Reality

Directions: On the chart below, the left side has descriptions of how the characters appear to be. Complete the right side of the chart by explaining the reality behind the appearances.

| Appearance | Reality |
|---|---------|
| 1. Gertrude was a devoted wife to Old Hamlet, and she seemed heartbroken when he died. | |
| 2. Claudius says he has mixed feelings of happiness and sadness about taking over the kingdom and marrying Gertrude because his brother so recently died. | |
| 3. Hamlet has gone insane. | |
| 4. Ophelia accidentally meets up with Hamlet while she is reading a book. | |
| 5. Ophelia returns gifts and letters to Hamlet because she no longer wants to have a relationship with him. | |
| 6. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are loyal friends to Hamlet. | |
| 7. Claudius decides to send Hamlet to England to protect him from Laertes. | |
| 8. A priest conducts Ophelia's funeral, and she is buried in the church's graveyard. | |

Make Up Your Mind, Hamlet!

Directions: Hamlet takes a long time (five acts!) to actually kill his father's murderer. There have been many opinions about the causes of Hamlet's hesitancy; the following are just a few of the possible explanations for why it takes Hamlet so long to take action against Claudius. Read each explanation and write why you think it is OR is not a good reason. Support your opinions with evidence from the play.

1. **Hamlet thinks too much. He overanalyzes each situation, and since he has these continuous mental debates, he does not take action.**

Answer & Evidence:

2. **Hamlet is too idealistic. He hesitates because he cannot believe that such evil exists in the world around him.**

Answer & Evidence:

3. **Hamlet does not take immediate action because he is a procrastinator who would rather whine about the situation than do something about it.**

Answer & Evidence:

4. **Hamlet is a tragic hero who is weighed down by the forces working against him.**

Answer & Evidence:

What Do You Think?

Directions: Read each quote in the chart below. Then paraphrase the quote in your own words, and explain if you agree or disagree with the statement. Back up your opinions with an explanation from the play or your own personal life experiences.

| Quote from <i>Hamlet</i> | Your Paraphrase | Agree or Disagree— Why? |
|---|-----------------|----------------------------|
| "I set it down that one may smile, and smile, and be a villain." | | |
| "This above all: to thine own self be true." | | |
| "For there is nothing good or bad, but thinking makes it so." | | |
| "I must be cruel only to be kind." | | |
| "Neither a borrower nor a lender be, for loan oft loses both itself and friend." | | |
| "I could be bounded in a nutshell, and count myself a king of infinite space—were it not that I have bad dreams." | | |
| "Conscience does make cowards of us all." | | |

Performing a Monologue

Presentation skills are becoming more and more important in today's society. The ability to speak well, whether it is with one person or in front of a large group, is a skill that people use everyday. By encouraging your students to memorize and perform a monologue written by William Shakespeare, you will be immersing them in great thoughts and language.

Although your students may be initially nervous about performing in front of their classmates, you can make the experience non-threatening by participating in it yourself ... you will show your students that even you can do it, and probably provide them with some good laughs!

1. Ask students to choose a monologue from the play to memorize. Each student can choose one of the provided monologues or choose another one from the play after checking with the teacher.
2. The teacher can model both effective and ineffective monologues (you can have fun with this, especially when modeling the "ineffective" monologue!). Then ask students to point out which elements of the performance were successful and which were not. On the board, write down a list of bad habits that can distract the audience or take away from the performance, such as fidgeting, monotone voice, inaudible volume, mispronunciations, and speaking too quickly. Then write down a list of elements that a successful performance should contain: eye contact with the audience, voice inflection, sufficient volume, evidence of understanding, pronunciation, and appropriate speed with the proper pauses.
3. Allow some time in class for students to practice their monologues. Pair students together (rotating with different partners at each practice session). Have students practice with their partners; the partners should offer constructive criticism, using the included checklist to help them make constructive suggestions.

Monologue Performance

Name: _____ Character: _____

The following requirements are graded on a scale of **1 to 5** (1 being lowest and 5 being highest):

- _____ **knowledge of lines** (did not miss any lines; very few awkward pauses)
- _____ **stage presence** (commands the audience's attention; use of eye contact; not constantly looking at the floor or shifting feet; did not stand in one spot without moving)
- _____ **body movement** (movements seem natural; no forced or unmotivated movements; movements fit the character)
- _____ **use of voice** (use of pauses; easy to hear and understand words)
- _____ **use of space** (did not stand in one spot)
- _____ **rehearsal is obvious** (actually took time to rehearse; everything flows)

Monologue Performance

Name: _____ Character: _____

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- _____ **use of space** (did not stand in one spot)
- _____ **rehearsal is obvious** (actually took time to rehearse; everything flows)

Hamlet

Act I, Scene 2

O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon against self-slaughter! O God, God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on it! O fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed. Things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead!—nay, not so much, not two.
So excellent a king, that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr. So loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? Why she would hang on him
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on. And yet, within a month—
Let me not think on it. Frailty, thy name is woman!

Polonius

Act I, Scene 3

Yet here, Laertes? ... There—my blessings with you!
Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.
The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel.
Beware of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
Bear it that the opposed may beware of thee.
Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice.
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy—rich, not gaudy.
For the apparel oft proclaims the man.
Neither a borrower nor a lender be,
For loan oft loses both itself and friend.
This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.
Farewell. My blessing season this in thee!

Ghost

Act I, Scene 5

I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night ...
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purg'd away ... List, list, O list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.
Murder most foul, as in the best it is.
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.
Now, Hamlet, hear.
'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me ...
But know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.
Thy uncle stole
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment ...
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand
Of life, of crown, of queen at once dispatch'd,
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin.
O, horrible, o, horrible, most horrible!
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not.
Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me.

Hamlet

Act II, Scene 2

I have heard
That guilty creatures sitting at a play
Have, by the very cunning of the scene,
Been struck so to the soul that presently
They have proclaim'd their malefactions.
For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
Play something like the murder of my father
Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks.
I'll tent him to the quick. If he but blench,
I'll know my course. The spirit I have seen
May be the devil, and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape. Yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy—
As he is very potent with such spirits—
Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
More relative than this. The play's the thing
Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

Hamlet

Act III, Scene 1

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? To die, to sleep—
No more—and by a sleep to say we end
The heartache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to ... To die, to sleep.
To sleep, perchance to dream—ay, there's the rub,
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause ...
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all.

Ophelia

Act III, Scene 1

O, what a noble mind is here overthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;
That unmatch'd form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

Claudius

Act III, Scene 3

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven.
It hath the primal eldest curse upon it.
A brother's murder! Pray can I not ...
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up.
My fault is past. But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my term, "Forgive me my foul murder"?
That cannot be, since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder—
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardon'd and retain the offence?

Gertrude

Act III, Scene 4

O Hamlet, speak no more!
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,
And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.
O, speak to me no more!
These words like daggers enter my ears.
No more, sweet Hamlet. No more!
Alas, he's mad! How is it with you,
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,
And with the incorporal air do hold discourse?
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep,
And, as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm,
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,
Starts up and stands on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of thy distemper
Sprinkle cool patience ...
O, Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain!

Gertrude

Act IV, Scene 7

There is a willow grows aslant a brook
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
There with fantastic garlands did she come
Of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples ...
There, on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hand, an envious sliver broke,
When down her weedy trophies and herself
Fell weeping in the brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up,
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indu'd
Unto that element. But long it could not be
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

Laertes

Act V, Scene 2

I am justly kill'd with mine own treachery.
Hamlet, thou art slain.
No medicine in the world can do thee good.
In thee there is not half an hour of life.
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and envenom'd. The foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me. Lo, here I lie,
Never to rise again. Thy mother's poison'd.
I can do no more. The king, the king's to blame.
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.
Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
Nor thine on me.

Horatio

Act V, Scene 2

Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!—
Why does this drum come hither?
What is it ye would see?
If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.
Give order that these bodies
High on a stage be placed to the view,
And let me speak to the yet-unknowing world
How these things came about. So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody, and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forc'd cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventor's heads. All this can I
Truly deliver.

Recommended Reading

Hamlet Resources

Hamlet: For Kids by Lois Burdett; Firefly Books Ltd., Buffalo, NY: September, 2000. Written in rhyming couplets and illustrated by children, this is a great book for students of all ages. Perfect for students performing readers' theatre.

Hamlet: The 1-Hour Guidebook, edited by David Grey and Gigi Bach; Spark Educational Publishing, New York, NY: 2005. An illustrated guidebook that can aid in comprehending the plot, characters, setting, and action of the play. This is an excellent resource for students to use before reading or viewing the play.

No Fear Shakespeare: Hamlet, edited by John Crowther; Spark Educational Publishing, New York, NY: 2003. Presents the original text of Shakespeare's play side by side with a modern version, with marginal notes and explanations and full descriptions of each character. This is an especially useful tool for struggling readers.

Reference Books

Brush Up Your Shakespeare! by Michael Macrone

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Shakespeare by Laurie Rozakis

Freeing Shakespeare's Voice by Kristin Linklater

The Friendly Shakespeare by Norrie Epstein

Shakespeare A to Z by Charles Boyce

Shakespeare Well-Versed: A Rhyming Guide to All His Plays by James Muirden

Teaching Shakespeare into the Twenty-First Century edited by Ronald E. Salomone and James E. Davis

Picture Books

A Child's Portrait of Shakespeare by Lois Burdett

All the World's A Stage by Rebecca Piatt Davidson

The Bard of Avon: The Story of William Shakespeare by Diane Stanley and Peter Vennema

Tales from Shakespeare by Charles and Mary Lamb

Tales from Shakespeare (comic book) by Marcia Williams

William Shakespeare and the Globe by Alike

Young Adult Novels

King of Shadows by Sandra Cooper

The Shakespeare Stealer by Gary Blackwood

Shakespeare's Scribe by Gary Blackwood

Shakespeare's Spy by Gary Blackwood

Websites

www.swshakespeare.org – see what's new at Southwest Shakespeare Company

www.allshakespeare.com – access to scripts, study guides, lesson plans, and other resources

www-tech.mit.edu/Shakespeare/works.html – the complete works of Shakespeare on-line

www.folger.edu – access to primary documents and lesson plans for teaching Shakespeare

shakespeare.palomar.edu/educational.htm – includes links to sites designed for teaching Shakespeare over the Internet; great for finding secondary resources to support the primary play being taught

www.teachersfirst.com/shakespr.shtml – has on-line quizzes and surveys related to particular plays; also has related sites with information about Elizabethan England

www.stratford.co.uk - the official Stratford resource center on William Shakespeare

Meeting AZ State Standards

By viewing Southwest Shakespeare's production of *Hamlet*, students can meet several of Arizona State Arts Standards. In addition, the activities included in this teacher's guide, when implemented in the classroom along with other teacher-assigned reading and writing activities, will allow students to meet various Arizona State Standards in Writing, Reading, and Listening and Speaking.

Writing Standards – Strand 3: Writing Applications

Concept 1: Expressive

Expressive writing includes personal narratives, stories, poetry, songs, and dramatic pieces. Writing may be based on real or imagined events (**Act-By-Act Writing Topics, journal entry assignments, pages 7-8**).

Concept 3: Functional

Functional writing provides specific directions or information related to real-world tasks. This includes letters, memos, schedules, directories, signs, manuals, forms, recipes, and technical pieces for specific content areas (**Act-By-Act Writing Topics, letter writing assignments, pages 7-8**).

Concept 5: Literary Response

Literary response is the writer's reaction to a literary selection. The response includes the writer's interpretation, analysis, opinion, and/or feelings about the piece of literature and selected elements within it (**Act-By-Act Writing & Discussion Topics, pages 7-9; Literary Analysis Topics, page 9**).

Reading Standards – Strand 1: Reading Process

Concept 6: Comprehension Strategies

Employ strategies to comprehend text (**Anticipation and Reaction Guide, page 10**).

Reading Standards – Strand 2: Comprehending Literary Text

Concept 1: Elements of Literature

Identify, analyze, and apply knowledge of the structure and elements of literature (**Appearance vs. Reality, page 11; Make Up Your Mind, Hamlet!, page 12; What Do You Think?, page 13**).

Concept 2: Historical and Cultural Aspects of Literature

Recognize and apply knowledge of the historical and cultural aspects of American, British, and world literature (**Act-By-Act Writing & Discussion Topics, pages 7-9**).

Listening and Speaking Standards

Standard 3: Students effectively listen and speak in situations that serve different purposes and involve a variety of audiences (**Performing a Monologue, pages 14-26**).

Arts Standards – Theatre

Standard 2: Art in Context

Students demonstrate how interrelated conditions influence and give meaning to the development and reception of thoughts, ideas, and concepts in the arts (**attending and discussing Southwest Shakespeare's performance of *Hamlet***).

Standard 3: Art as Inquiry

Students demonstrate how the arts reveal universal concepts and themes. Students reflect upon and assess the characteristics and merits of their work and the work of others (**attending and discussing Southwest Shakespeare's performance of *Hamlet***).

Educator Comments

Please help us to improve. We invite you to share your thoughts about this production. Please **return this form** to any Southwest Shakespeare Company volunteer as you leave, **OR mail** it to us at P.O. Box 30595, Mesa, AZ 85275, **OR fax** it to 480.924.4310. Thank you for completing and returning this form, for coming to our performance, and for introducing your students to the wonders of Shakespeare and live theatre!

Please feel free to use the back of this form to include any additional comments.

Name of Play: _____ Performance Date: _____

Did the confirmation packet provide you with the information you needed? Why/why not? _____

Did you find the Teacher Guide helpful? What did you particularly like/dislike? _____

Did you enjoy the performance? Why/why not? _____

Could you understand it? _____

Could you hear it? _____

What did you think of it visually? _____

Would you recommend Southwest Shakespeare to other educators? Why/why not? _____

Your name and school (optional) _____

E-mail address (optional) _____