***Hamlet***

**Questions**

**Act I**

**Scene I**

1. Where does this play take place?

2. As the play opens, Horatio joins Marcellus and Bernardo at their night watch. Why has Horatio joined them?

3. In line 69, how does Horatio interpret the appearance of the ghost?

4. What three questions does Marcellus raise?

5. In a long speech (lines 79-107), Horatio answers Marcellus. Summarize as briefly as you can the events that have led to preparations for war.

6. In lines 130-139, what three reasons does Horatio list for the superstition of a ghost's returning from the grave?

7. Why do Horatio and Marcellus decide to tell Hamlet fails to list?

**Scene II**

1. What news does King Claudius announce at the opening of scene 2?

2. Why does Claudius send Cornelius and Voltimand to Norway? (lines 27-39)

3. What bothers Claudius and Gertrude about Hamlet's dress?

4. Why does Claudius want Hamlet to remain at court?

5. About how long has Hamlet's father been dead?

6. Explain why Hamlet says, "Frailty, thy name is woman!" (line 146)

7. At the end of scene II, what is Hamlet's plan?

**Scene III**

1. Why does Laertes warn his sister Ophelia not to place too much hope in Hamlet's attentions to her?

2. What does Laertes say must govern Hamlet's marriage choice?

3. What advice does Ophelia in turn give to Laertes?

4. In lines 58-80, Polonius gives a great deal of advice to his son Laertes. In this speech, Polonius covers nine items of advice. In your own words, explain what the following means:

a. (lines 59-60) "Give thy thoughts no tongue,/ Nor any unproportioned thought his act."

b. (line 68) "Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;"

c. (lines 75-77) "Neither a borrower nor a lender be;/ For loan oft loses both itself and friend,…"

5. What are Polonius's instructions to Ophelia about Hamlet?

**Scene IV**

1. What is happening at the court while Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus are on the platform?

2. Why does Hamlet denounce the custom of drunken celebration?

3. What happens at the end of scene IV?

**Scene V**

1. What does the Ghost reveal about the manner of his death?

2. What does the ghost tell Hamlet about his mother?

3. In lines 82-89, what tasks does the Ghost tell Hamlet to undertake?

4. In lines 172-173, what does Hamlet imply he may decide to do?

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**Questions**

**Act II**

**Scene I**

1. At the opening of this scene, to where is Polonius sending Reynaldo?

2. Why does Polonius send him on this journey?

3. By what trick is Reynaldo supposed to get information about Laertes?

4. What does this reveal about Polonius's character?

5. How would you describe the effect of Polonius's rambling speech to Reynaldo in lines 50-67?

6. How does Ophelia describe Hamlet's appearance to her?

7. What is Polonius's conclusion about Hamlet?

**Scene II**

1. At the beginning of scene II, for whom has Claudius sent?

2. Why has he sent for them?

3. What news do Voltimand and Cornelius bring back from Norway?

4. In lines 76-80, what request does Norway make of Claudius?

5. What is humorously ironic about Polonius saying, "Brevity is the soul of wit"?

6. in lines 158-165, what plan is formed to test Polonius's hypothesis that Hamlet is mad from rejected love?

7. Hamlet calls Polonius a "fishmonger". Why?

8. In lines 204-209, what does Polonius say about the contrast between madness and sanity?

9. Why does Hamlet tell Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that "Denmark's a prison"?

10. In lines 293-310, what reason does Hamlet give to his friends for his current condition?

11. According to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, why are the players traveling?

12. Hamlet realizes that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern cannot be trusted. What does he let them know in lines 376-377?

13. Why does Hamlet call Polonius "Jephthah" in line 407?

14. In lines 447-515, Hamlet and the First Player recite lines from a play. This play tells how Pyrrhus slays the Trojan king Priam to avenge his father's murder. How is Hamlet like Pyrrhus? How is he unlike Pyrrhus?

15. In lines 531-539, what two questions does Hamlet ask the First Player?

16. What causes Hamlet to exclaim, "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!"?

17. In the passage beginning with line 586, what plan does Hamlet devise?

18. In lines 596-601, why does Hamlet feel he must have evidence of Claudius's guilt?

19. In thinking about Act II, list examples of one or more characters spying on another character.

20. Make a list of character traits Hamlet possesses, as seen in Acts I & II.

***Hamlet***

**Questions**

**Act III**

**Scene I**

1. What do Rosencrantz and Guildenstern report to Polonius?

2. How does Claudius react when Polonius says, "…with devotion's visage, And pious action we do sugar o'er/ The devil himself"?

3. What plan do Polonius, Claudius and Ophelia now put into action?

4. What is the nature of Hamlet's soliloquy, lines 57-91?

5. What is Hamlet's main argument against suicide?

6. Why does Hamlet treat Ophelia as cruelly as he does? What has changed him?

7. What thinly veiled threat to Claudius does Hamlet voice, after he becomes of his hidden presence? (lines 148-150)

8. At the end of this scene, what does the King decide to do with Hamlet?

**Scene II**

1. What qualities in Horatio cause Hamlet to enlist his assistance?

2. What does Hamlet ask Horatio to do?

3. Summarize what happens in the play-within-a-play.

4. Why, in line 233, does Hamlet refer to the play-within-a-play as "The Mouse-trap"?

5. What is the King's reaction to the play?

6. In lines 354-363, to what object does Hamlet compare himself? Why?

7. As Hamlet goes to his mother at the end of this scene, what does he admonish himself to do?

**Scene III**

1. What does Claudius ask Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to do?

2. In lines 11-23, what do Rosencrantz and Guildenstern say in support of Claudius?

3. In lines 39-40, what does Claudius find nearly impossible to do?

4. Why doesn't Hamlet kill Claudius when he discovers him in an attitude of prayer?

**Scene IV**

1. What does Polonius urge the Queen to do?

2. Under what misapprehension does Hamlet slay Polonius?

3. In lines 20-21, Hamlet says to his mother, "You go not till I set you up a glass/ Where you may see the inmost part of you." Beginning with line 55, in what way does he do this?

4. Why does the Ghost appear to Hamlet again?

5. What does Hamlet ask of his mother?

6. The climax is the turning point in a story or play when the action changes course and begins to resolve itself. It is generally agreed that the climax of Hamlet occurs in Act Three. When does it occur.

***Hamlet***

**Questions**

**Act IV**

**Scenes I & II**

1. How does the queen protect Hamlet?

2. What does Claudius ask Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to do?

3. What does Hamlet mean when he calls Rosencrantz a "sponge"?

**Scene III**

1. Why does Claudius say he must hide the haste with which Hamlet is being sent away?

2. In lines 34-38, what does Hamlet tell Claudius he has done with Polonius?

3. What does Claudius arrange to happen to Hamlet when he arrives in England?

**Scene IV**

1. Who does Hamlet meet in this scene?

2. What purpose unites Fortinbras's troops?

3. What effect does this meeting have on Hamlet?

**Scenes V & VI**

1. What has happened to Ophelia?

2. Why does the Queen agree to go see her?

3. What are the problems Claudius lists in lines 77-94?

4. Why does Laertes break into Claudius's chamber?

5. What does Claudius tell Laertes to do?

6. What happens to Hamlet during his passage to England?

**Scene VII**

1. In lines 5-9, what does Laertes ask Claudius?

2. What is the King's response?

3. What scheme is planned by Claudius and Laertes?

4. What is their back-up plan?

5. What news does the Queen bring? Recount the scene she describes.

6. Do you believe Ophelia's death was an accident or suicide? Explain.

***Hamlet***

**Questions**

**Act V**

**Scene I**

1. What implications are the clowns' making in their opening conversation?

2. Why does the manner of Ophelia's burial cause so much comment?

3. What reason is given for her having a Christian burial?

4. What is foreshadowed in the scene in the graveyard?

5. What is ironic about Hamlet joking with the grave-diggers?

6. What general comment about time is made in the grave-digging scene?

7. In line 222, how does the priest account for Ophelia's Christian burial?

8. What does Laertes do that angers Hamlet?

9. What is Hamlet's response to these actions of Laertes?

**Scene II**

1. What did Hamlet do to the commission letters that Claudius had sent with him?

2. In line 62, Horatio exclaims, "Why, what a king is this!" What change (finally) has taken place in Hamlet?

3. What does Hamlet mean when he says, "…by the image of my cause, I see/ the portraiture of his…"?

4. In lines 202-204, how does Hamlet feel about the fencing match?

5. What is the nature of Hamlet's speech to Laertes before they fence?

6. Who accidentally drinks the poisoned wine?

7. How is Hamlet mortally wounded?

8. What long-anticipated act does Hamlet finally complete?

9. What does Horatio attempt to do?

10. Why does Hamlet entreat Horatio to stay alive?

11. What is Hamlet's final act as King of Denmark?

12. Certain actions throughout the final scene of the play can be linked by cause and effect. For every cause that's listed below, give the effect (results) of the listed causes (actions).

Hamlet rewrites Claudius's orders

Hamlet agrees to take part in the fencing match

Claudius poisons a cup of wine

Laertes poisons his sword point