

20.21

VIRTUAL SHAKESPEARIENCE



HAMLET

by William Shakespeare

Directed By:
Veronica Von Tobel and Sara Bruner



A Very Special Thank You!

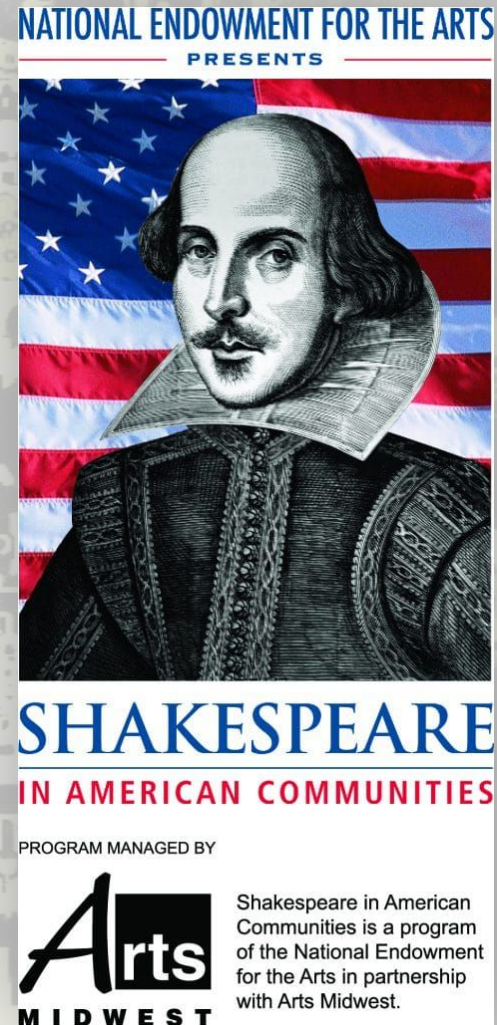
As a part of Idaho Shakespeare Festival's educational programming, *Shakespeareience* performances have enriched the lives of well over one million students and teachers since 1981 with productions that convey the unique and impactful voice of theater arts. The magic of this art form is brought to schools across the State of Idaho each Winter/Spring semester with assistance from a generous group of underwriters:

- **Shakespeare in American Communities: National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest**
- **Idaho Commission on the Arts**
- **Idaho Humanities Council and National Endowment for the Humanities**
- **Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation**
- **Idaho Community Foundation and the following Funds:**
 - **F.M., Anne G. & Beverly B. Bistline Foundation**
 - **Rachel Meyer Memorial Fund**
 - **James A. Pinney Memorial Fund**
- **John William Jackson Fund**



Shakespeareance: Hamlet 2021

This project is part of the
Shakespeare in American
Communities, a program of
the National Endowment for
the Arts in partnership with
Arts Midwest



Using This Guide...

Dear Teachers,

Welcome to the Shakesperience study guide for *Hamlet*! This collection of materials has been designed to expand your students' engagement with the performance as well as provide back ground knowledge on William Shakespeare and the influential literature he wrote.

This resource includes a range of information, discussion topics, and activities that can stand on their own or serve as building blocks for a larger unit. The activities are designed to be mixed, matched and modified to suit the needs of your particular students.

Inside, you'll find activities to share with your students both before the show and after the show, indicated by headings at the top of the page. These are designed to help focus your students' engagement with the performance by giving them specific themes to watch out for, as well as topics for discussion following the film. Each activity is designed to meet Idaho Standards of Education to foster critical thinking and problem solving skills.

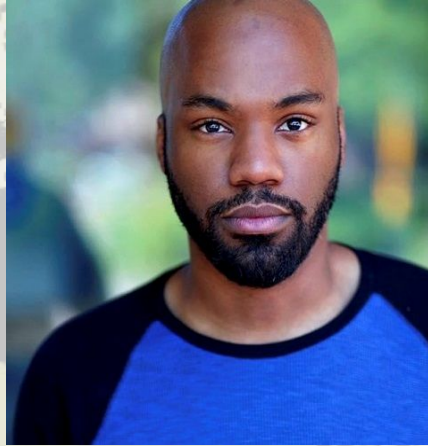
We encourage you and your students to share your thoughts with us! Any of the artwork or activities your students send will be shared with the artists who created *Hamlet*, and any feedback from you will help to improve our study guides for future audiences!

Thank you so much!

THE cast



Jaime Nebeker
Hamlet



Domonique Champion
Horatio



Leta Harris-Neustaedter
Gertrude



Luke Massengill
Claudius

THE cast (continued)



Benjamin Kemper
Polonius/Security Officer



Anna Sylvester
Ophelia/ Security Officer



Dakotah Brown
Laertes



Chad Ethan Shohet
Marcellus/Ghost
King/Player King/Osric

Creative Team

Creator/Director- Sara Bruner
Creator/Director- Veronica Von Tobel
Production Manager- Jaclyn Miller
Film Editor- Nicki Steen Cathro
Music Composer- Matthew Webb
Graphic Designer- Mack Shirilla
Costume Designer- Esther Haberman
Sound Engineer- Brian Chismar

THE LIFE OF THE BARD



WILLIAM S, 44

6 MILES AWAY
ACTIVE 11 MINUTES AGO

ABOUT WILLIAM
TO BAE OR NOT TO BAE?

William Shakespeare was born in April 1564 in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, on England's Avon River. Because of poor record-keeping in small towns, his exact day of birth is unknown; it is traditionally celebrated on April 23rd. When he was eighteen, he married Anne Hathaway (who was 26 at the time). The couple had three children, one of whom died of the plague in childhood.

The bulk of Shakespeare's working life was spent in London. He enjoyed success not only as a play wright, but also as an actor and shareholder in the acting company, Lord Chamberlain's Men (later known as the King's Men). In 1593 Shakespeare became a published poet; at the time theaters had been closed due to the plague, a contagious epidemic disease that devastated the population of London. He wrote many of his plays on English history as well as several comedies and at least two tragedies (Titus Andronicus and Romeo and Juliet). It is assumed that Shakespeare's sonnets were also written during the 1590s. When the theaters reopened in 1594, Shakespeare continued his career as an actor, playwright, and acting company shareholder. His career would span over the next twenty years.

THE LIFE OF THE BARD

(PART 2)

In 1599, Lord Chamberlain's Men built a theater for themselves across the river from London, naming it The Globe. The plays that are considered by many to be Shakespeare's major tragedies (Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Macbeth) were written while the company was residing in this theater, as were such comedies as Twelfth Night and Measure for Measure. Many of Shakespeare's plays were performed at court (both for Queen Elizabeth I and her successor King James I), some were presented at the Inns of Court (the residencies of London's legal societies), and some were doubtless performed in other towns, at the universities, and at great houses when the acting company went on tour. Between 1608 and 1612, Shakespeare wrote several plays – among them The Winter's Tale and The Tempest – presumably for the company's new indoor Blackfriars theater, though the plays seem to have been performed at the Globe and at court as well.



THE LIFE OF THE BARD (PART 3)

Shakespeare wrote very little after 1612, widely thought to be the year he wrote King Henry VIII. It was during a performance of Henry VIII in 1613 that the Globe theater caught fire and burned to the ground. Shakespeare retired from the stage sometime between 1610 and 1613 and returned to Stratford, where he died on April 23rd, 1616.

Until the 18th Century, Shakespeare was generally thought to have been no more than a simple, rough and untutored genius. Theories were advanced that his plays had actually been written by someone more educated, perhaps statesman and philosopher Sir Francis Bacon or the Earl of Southampton, who was Shakespeare's primary patron. However, he was celebrated in his own time by English writer Ben Jonson and others who saw in him a brilliance that would endure. Since the 19th century, Shakespeare's achievements have been more consistently recognized, and throughout the Western world he has come to be regarded as the greatest dramatist ever.

HAMLET: THE SYNOPSIS

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, has multiple woes. The ghost of his father haunts Elsinore; his uncle, Claudius, has married Queen Gertrude, his mother, and assumed the throne; and Denmark is being threatened with an invading army from Norway. Hamlet meets the ghost of his dead father who reveals that Claudius poisoned him—and the ghost demands Hamlet exact revenge. In order to carry this out, Hamlet feigns madness; as part of his insanity, he scorns the affections of Ophelia, daughter of Polonius, to whom he had made romantic overtures. Polonius grows concerned over Hamlet's apparent insanity and reveals it to the King and Queen. Meanwhile, Hamlet struggles to convince himself that Claudius is the murderer of his father, and in an attempt to "catch the king's conscience," Hamlet convinces a traveling troupe of actors to perform a play in which the action closely resembles the events related to him by the ghost.

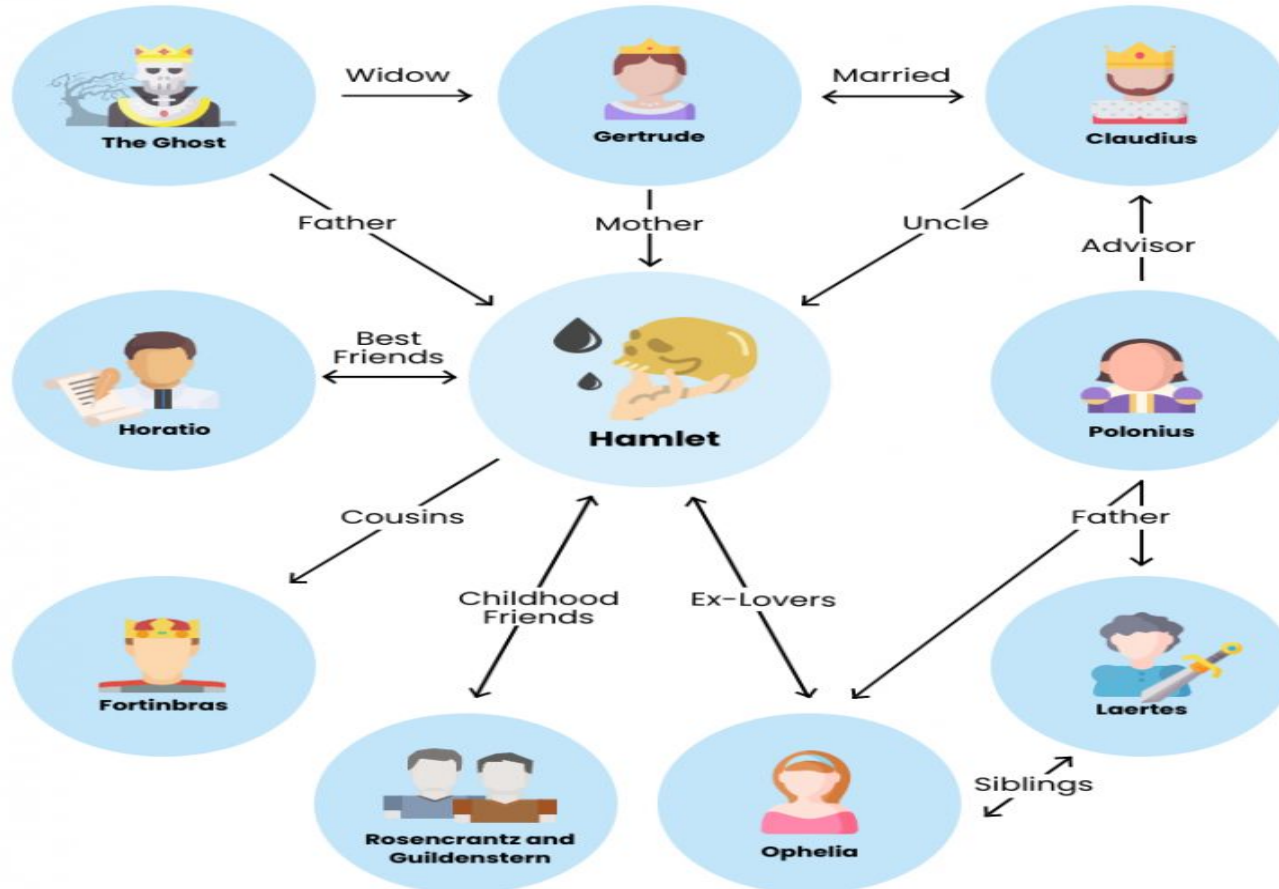
While Hamlet, judging the reaction of Claudius, is convinced of the new king's guilt, he can't bring himself to slay him outright. Instead, Hamlet confronts Gertrude with the news that she is sleeping with the killer of her husband. Unfortunately, Polonius—who is hidden behind a tapestry in the Queen's chamber, eavesdropping—panics and cries for help; Hamlet stabs him, thinking it is Claudius. Of course, when this news is given to Claudius, the King sends Hamlet to England with the ostensible purpose of securing Hamlet's safety and the recovery of his senses. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two childhood friends of Hamlet's who are now spying for Claudius, are to accompany him. The trick is that Hamlet will bear a letter to the King of England in which Claudius asks England to sentence Hamlet to death.

HAMLET: THE SYNOPSIS PART 2

In the midst of these events, Ophelia loses her own sanity; she is driven to madness by Hamlet's condition and the death of Polonius. Laertes, her brother, returns to Denmark from his studies and vows vengeance upon Hamlet for what the prince has done to his family. News is brought that Hamlet has returned to Denmark, much to the surprise of Claudius, and that Ophelia has drowned herself in a river. Claudius now plots with Laertes to kill Hamlet upon his return to Elsinore. Meanwhile, Hamlet meets Horatio, his best friend, and tells how he altered the letter so that the execution order was for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern instead of him. At the end of Hamlet's tale, Ophelia's funeral procession enters, and Laertes and Hamlet confront one another. Laertes challenges Hamlet to a duel.

This is all part of Claudius's plot; instead of dull blades, Laertes will select a sharp one. In addition, Laertes is to poison the tip of his blade so that a wound will kill the prince. And, just in case the previous measures are not enough, Claudius will keep a poisoned chalice from which Hamlet will drink. The plan goes awry from the beginning; Laertes is unable to wound Hamlet during the first pass. Between rounds, Gertrude raises a toast to Hamlet with the poisoned chalice. Then, in the heat of the duel, Laertes manages to wound Hamlet but loses the poisoned rapier to him, and Laertes himself is poisoned as well. Gertrude swoons to her death; Laertes falls and reveals the plot against Hamlet, telling him he has "not a half-hour's life" in him. Enraged, Hamlet stabs Claudius with the poisoned blade and makes him drink from the chalice that slew Gertrude. This done, Hamlet collapses and dies in Horatio's arms as Fortinbras, King of Norway, enters the castle. Fortinbras is left to rule Denmark, as the entire royal family is dead, and he bids his men give Hamlet and the rest a proper funeral.

Get familiar with the characters before you begin the show, and use this handy Character Map to track the relationships between characters while you watch!



HIP HOP OR SHAKESPEARE?

Read the following quotes and see if you can guess whether they were written by William Shakespeare or a contemporary Hip Hop artist.

Hip Hop

Shakespeare

- | | | |
|---|----------|-------|
| 1. "To destroy the beauty from which one came" | 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. "Maybe it's hatred I spew, maybe it's food for the spirit" | 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. "Men do their broken weapons rather use than their bare hands" | 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. "I was not born under a rhyming planet" | 4. _____ | _____ |
| 5. "The most benevolent king communicates through your dreams" | 5. _____ | _____ |

Important Words

Shakespeare wrote in the language of Early Modern English, which is much closer to contemporary English than we think. Even so, there are plenty of unusual words in his text. Create five sentences using some of the provided vocabulary words.

auspicious: *adj* – promising success; favorable

bestial: *adj* – without reason or intelligence; inhuman; brutal

chide: *verb* – to scold or reproach

discord: *noun* – lack of agreement between persons; dispute

dispatch: *verb* – to send off with haste; to put to death

entreaty: *noun* – an earnest request or plea

felling: *verb* – the knocking over or cutting down of something

filial: *adj* – relating to the relationship of a child to a parent

heed: *verb* – to give careful attention

incorporeal: *adj* – bodiless or immaterial; without substance

ostentatious: *adj* – intended to attract notice or attention

peevish: *adj* – showing annoyance or irritation, causing a bad mood

portent: *noun* – indication of something important about to happen

tempestuous: *adj* – tumultuous or turbulent in nature; stormy

Important Words (continued)

"Bro, that jacket is OSTENTATIOUS. Where can I buy one?"

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Hamlet on Film

There are many film versions of Hamlet, including the following. Have you seen any of them?

(1990)



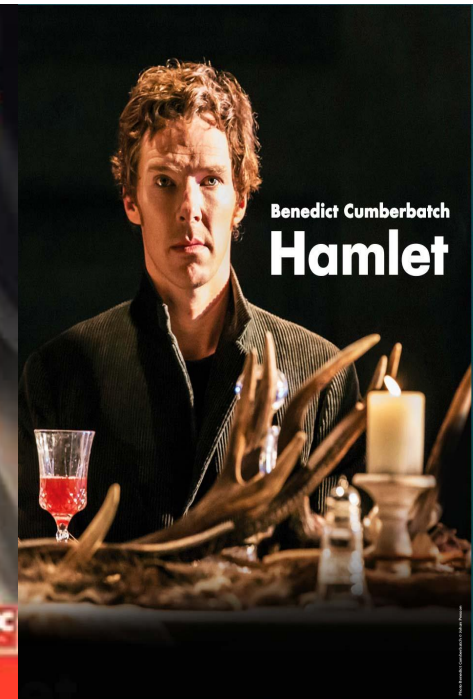
(1996)



(2009)

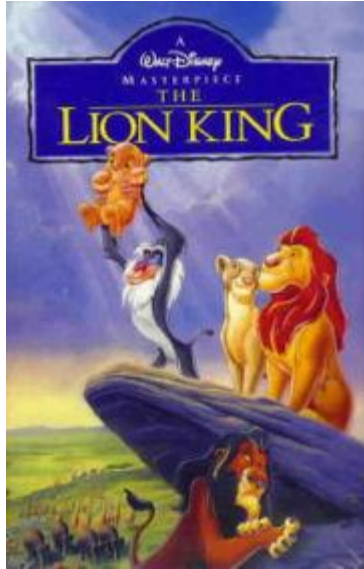


(2015)

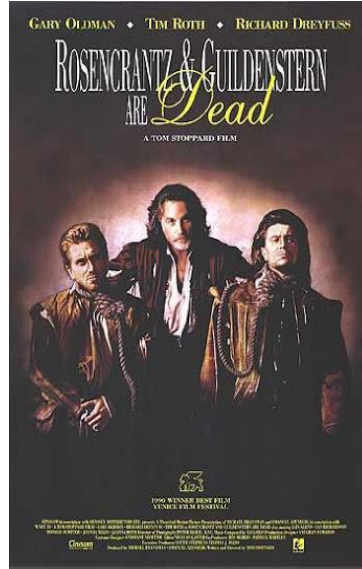


Hamlet: REMIXED

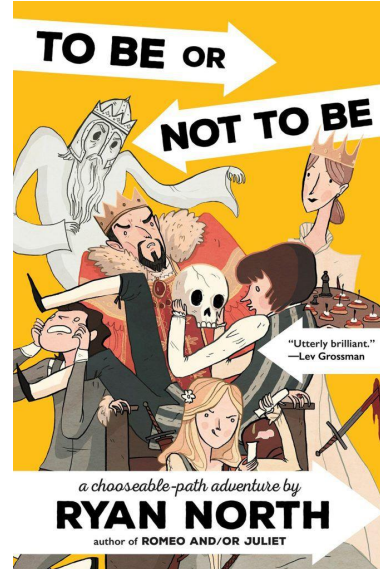
An adaptation is a new story based on an existing work. Check out the following adaptations, all based on Hamlet!



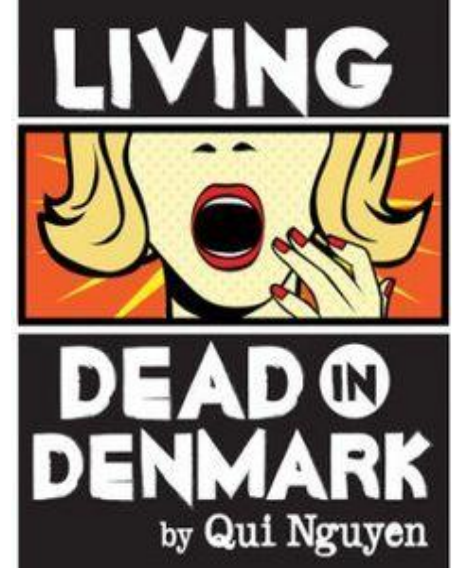
Disney's 'The Lion King' may be the most popular adaptation of Shakespeare's Hamlet



'Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead' is a dark comedy about life, death, and fate



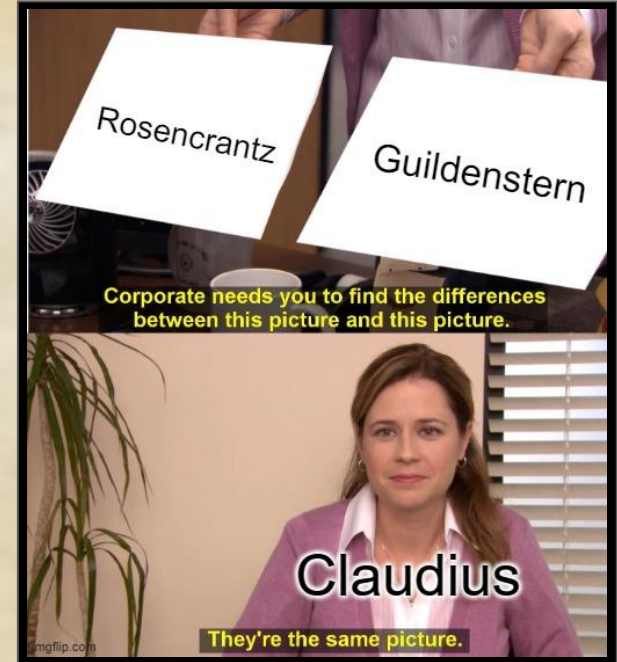
'To Be or Not to Be' is a comedic videogame adaptation of Shakespeare's original play



'Living Dead in Denmark' is a sequel play to Shakespeare's original, except with Zombies and Kung-Fu

Meme IT

Use this free online Meme generator (<https://imgflip.com/memegenerator>) to make three memes based on Hamlet. Students are encouraged to explore the entire text to find inspiration. We have included the following examples to help you get started.



2 🐝 OR 🚫 2 🐝

CHOOSE A SCENE FROM HAMLET TO TRANSLATE INTO EMOJIS. SEE IF YOU CAN CAPTURE THE MAIN ACTION OF THE SCENE. THEN TRADE WITH A FRIEND (OR SHARE WITH THE CLASS) AND SEE IF THEY CAN GUESS WHAT SCENE IT IS! HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES TO HELP YOU GET STARTED...



ACT I SCENE 1



ACT III SCENE 4



ACT IV SCENE 5

THE PLAY(LIST)'S THE THING!

Choose a character from Shakespeare's Hamlet and create a 5 Song playlist that they might listen to. Include explanations for each song, and why you arranged them in the way you did. Think about who the character is, how they feel, and what happens to them in the story. Once you finish, share your playlists with the class! The following is an example you can use for inspiration.

Character: Gertrude

Song 1. White Wedding - Billy Idol

Song 2. Sweet Child O' Mine - Guns n' Roses

Song 3. Everybody Hurts - R.E.M.

Song 4. I Hate Myself for Loving You - Joan Jett and the Blackhearts

Song 5. These Boots are Made for Walkin' - Nancy Sinatra

THE PLay(LIST)'S THE THING!

Character: _____

Song 1. _____ by _____

Song 2. _____ by _____

Song 3. _____ by _____

Song 4. _____ by _____

Song 5. _____ by _____

DRESSED TO KILL

A Costume Designer's job is to create a specific 'look' for each character in a play based on the time period, the character's personality, and their relationships with the other characters in the story. You might notice that Claudius and Gertrude's costumes live in the same color world since they are married royalty. Now you're the Costume Designer! Choose a character from Hamlet, choose a time period, and create a collage of costume inspirations for them based on your choices. Be creative! Does your version of Hamlet take place in the 1920's? The future? Make sure to include explanations for why you selected the 'looks' you picked.



This is the costume 'plate' for Polonius and Laertes.
Credit:
Esther
Haberlen

KEEPING THE BEAT

Shakespeare famously wrote in a rhythm called Iambic Pentameter. This means each of his verse lines contains a total of 10 syllables, split into 5 'chunks' or 'iamb'. An iamb (pronounced 'I am') is a pair of syllables, one unstressed and the other stressed. The following words can be considered iambs, the underline representing where the natural stress occurs: inspire, collapse, balloon, reflect, KA-BOOM.

The following sentences are written in iambic pentameter, but missing their final iamb. Fill in the blank using a word with one unstressed syllable and another stressed syllable to complete the line.

1. At dinnertime, I like to eat _____ .
2. I can't believe that Steve just said _____ .
3. My favorite movie EVER is _____ .
4. I really hope you like your new _____ .
5. This insta post is sick, check out _____ .

Discussion Topics

Theme to Follow: parent/child conflict

In many of Shakespeare's play, parents, and children often have life-altering conflicts. Think about Hamlet's relationship with his parents when considering the following questions.

- How do you think Hamlet's relationship with his mother changed throughout the play?
- What does this say about the bonds formed between children and their parents?
- Hamlet is clearly loyal to his father's memory. How does this conflict with his mother's actions? Should he have stayed loyal to his step-father, like she did?
- How did Ophelia and Laertes' relationship with their father differ from Hamlet's relationships? Do you think their family dynamic helped or hindered their relationships with Hamlet?

Major themes of *Hamlet* include a variety of ideas and emotions: revenge, corruption, reality, spirituality, and loyalty are a few among them.

Use the examples and prompts below, or have students select a quote from the play and then address the theme(s) associated with their selection. Encourage students to consider the different viewpoints their theme brings up and discuss these further.

Theme to Follow: technology

Our version of Hamlet was specifically told through the lense of technology:

- How do you think this affects the story?
- What does having the story told this way add to the themes of Hamlet?
- Is it easier to see similarities between Hamlet's world and the world we have been living in for a year?
- What is the significance of the end?

Theme to Follow: Revenge

One of the biggest themes of Hamlet is revenge:

- Why do you think it takes Hamlet so long to act out his revenge?
- What ultimately is the catalyst for Hamlet killing Claudius
- Was revenge the best option? How could Hamlet have sought justice without resorting to murder?
- Do you believe people can change? Whether it's Claudius having a change of heart or Hamlet becoming a murderer?

Think Like a Critic

This is your students' opportunity to express their thoughts and opinions about the performance of *Hamlet* that they just saw! Invite them to think about their experience and answer the following questions:

1. What is the name of your school?
2. Was the story of *Hamlet* clear to you?
3. Did you learn something from this play that you did not expect to learn?
4. What was your favorite part of the performance? What did you like about it?
5. Did you have a least favorite part of the performance? Why?
6. Were there any additional aspects of the show that stood out to you (i.e. music, costumes, jokes, etc.)? What did you like most about those aspects of the show?
7. How is having a filmed performance different than a live one? What are the pros and cons of both?

Please Mail or email their reviews, any activities they have done, or photos to:

Veronica@idahoshakespeare.org

Idaho Shakespeare Festival
Attn: Education Department
P.O. Box 9365
Boise, ID 83707

expanding the activity

Have your students pretend they are reviewers for a major newspaper or website critiquing the film! They can name the newspaper, format their article, add headlines and "photographs," and then display their publications around the classroom!

