



**MARIN  
SHAKESPEARE  
COMPANY**

**TEEN TOURING COMPANY 2023  
PRESENTS**

# Hamlet



**PLAYING FOR GOOD  
ARTS | EDUCATION | SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**DISCOVER  
EVERY  
GUIDE**



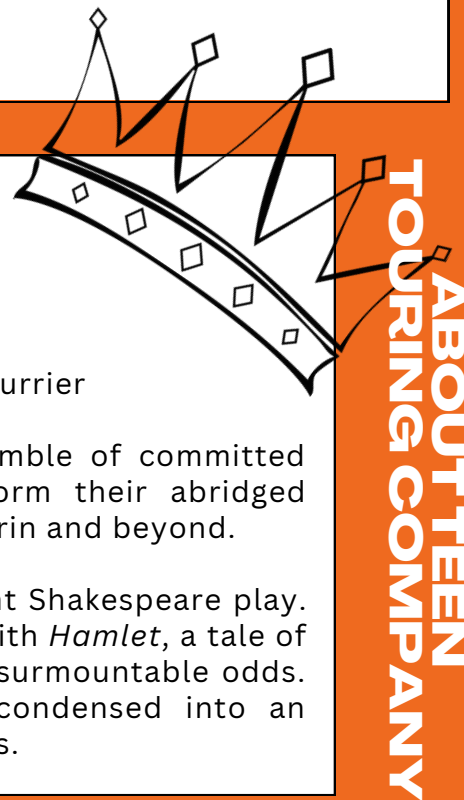
**Teachers, Students, and Audiences!**

This Discovery Guide was compiled to enhance your experience with Teen Touring Company's 2023 production of *Hamlet*. This guide is just the beginning and I hope the information, activities, and resources inside will challenge you to engage with the play in new ways and inspire you to dig deeper into the works of William Shakespeare.

If you have any questions, want to discuss the contents of this guide or our production, or are looking for more ideas about bringing Shakespeare alive in your classroom, I would love to hear from you.

Sincerely,

**Elana Kepner (she/her), Education Director**  
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**Costume Designer:** Luisa Frasconi  
**Set Assistance:** Jody Branham, Jason Coale  
**Marin Shakespeare Company Managing Director:** Lesley Currier



Marin Shakespeare's Teen Touring Company is an ensemble of committed young actors from all over the Bay Area, who perform their abridged production for schools and community venues around Marin and beyond.

Each year, the Teen Touring Company presents a different Shakespeare play. This year, after a 3-year hiatus, TTC is on the road again with *Hamlet*, a tale of ghosts, grief, identity, and taking action in the face of insurmountable odds. Our production features Shakespeare's longest play condensed into an intense 50 minutes, with 6 talented actors playing 16 roles.

William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was written during the Elizabethan Era, also called the Renaissance, which was a time of great artistic and intellectual creativity. The play was likely written between 1599 and 1601 and was first performed in London in 1609. Shakespeare probably wrote the role of Hamlet for actor Richard Burbage and Shakespeare himself may have played the Ghost at some point.

Shakespeare likely drew from various sources for the play, including the legend of Amleth, a tale of revenge from Scandinavian folklore. He also borrowed from the works of other contemporary writers, including Thomas Kyd's "The Spanish Tragedy" and Michel de Montaigne's essays. However, Shakespeare's treatment of these sources was original and inventive, and the resulting play has become one of the most iconic works in the English language. *Hamlet* has inspired countless adaptations on film, television and in literature, as well as dance, opera, visual art and even video games.

# SHAKESPEARE

## THE MAN, THE MYTH, THE LEGEND



Let's talk about the dude himself: William Shakespeare. He was born on April 23rd, 1564 in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, a small town on the Avon River. His dad was a glove maker and his mom came from a pretty wealthy family. But young Will was always more interested in writing than in gloves (can you blame him?).

In 1582, when he was just 18, Will married Anne Hathaway (not that one). They had 3 children, Susanna, and twins Hamnet and Judith.

Shakespeare went off the grid for a bit after his twins were born in 1585. Historians can only guess what he was up to during these “lost years.” He may have been on the run from the law for deer poaching, working as a Latin and Greek tutor, acting with a traveling theatre troupe, serving in the military, or just helping out with the family business in Stratford.

By 1592, we know Shakespeare, now in his early 20s, had moved to London and started acting and writing plays for a theatre company called the Lord Chamberlain's Men. Eventually, he became a part-owner of the company and they even built a new theatre called the Globe. Talk about a power move. He also performed for Queen Elizabeth I herself and may have even written plays at her request.

Shakespeare had a prolific career as a playwright and poet, with 38 (or more) comedies, tragedies, and histories to his name, as well as 154 sonnets, 2 epic poems, and a handful of other bits of verse. And this is just the writing we know about! Some scholars think there are Shakespeare plays and other works lost to history. Imagine that garage sale find!

Shakespeare continued to write and act until he retired to Stratford in 1613, shortly before the Globe Theatre burned down during a performance of *Henry VIII*.

William Shakespeare died on April 23, 1616, meaning he died on his 52nd birthday. Iconic, right?

Now, you might be thinking, "Okay, but why should I care about this dead white dude?" Well, let me tell you, Shakespeare was a trailblazer. He wrote plays that dealt with all sorts of topics, from love and jealousy to power and betrayal. He liked to mix comedy, drama, the supernatural, political commentary, a crude joke or two, and lots of sword fights. And he created characters that were so complex and deeply human that people still study them today. He is also credited with inventing so many words and phrases we still use, like “eyeball,” “gloomy,” “swagger,” “break the ice” and “wild goose chase.”

More than 400 years after his death, Shakespeare continues to be the most-produced playwright in the world. His plays have been translated into over 100 languages, including French, Japanese, Arabic, and even Klingon, the fictional language spoken by the alien species in the Star Trek franchise.

So there you have it, folks. William Shakespeare: word-smith, playwright, poet, actor, businessman, student of the human condition, and total icon.

**Act I:** Prince Hamlet returns home to Denmark for his father's funeral, only to discover that his uncle Claudius has married his mother, Gertrude, and assumed the throne. Hamlet is tormented by grief, anger, and suspicion. A ghost appears to him, claiming to be his father and revealing that he was murdered by Claudius. Hamlet vows to avenge his father's death.

**Act II:** Hamlet begins to act erratically, feigning madness in order to investigate his father's murder and plot his revenge. He alienates his friends, Ophelia (his love interest), and his mother. Claudius invites Hamlet's school friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to court to find the cause of Hamlet's strange behavior.

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

HAMLET (ACT III, SCENE 1)



**Act III:** Polonius and Claudius test their theory that Hamlet's madness is caused by his love for Ophelia, but Hamlet rejects Ophelia, denying his love for her. Hamlet arranges a play reenacting his father's murder, hoping to catch Claudius's guilty conscience. The plan works, and Claudius storms out. However, Hamlet hesitates to kill him, leading to further delays and doubt. Gertrude confronts Hamlet and during their argument, Hamlet accidentally kills Polonius, thinking he was Claudius.

**Act IV:** Claudius uses the murder of Polonius as an excuse to send Hamlet to England, conveying orders with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to have Hamlet killed. Meanwhile, Ophelia goes mad with grief over the death of her father and dies by drowning, just as Laertes returns to Denmark. Laertes vows revenge against Hamlet with the help of Claudius. During a duel, Laertes will cut Hamlet with a poisoned sword and Claudius will serve him poisoned wine.

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

CLAUDIUS (ACT IV, SCENE 5)

**Act V:** Hamlet returns in time to see Ophelia buried. Hamlet tells Horatio that he discovered Claudius' plan to have him killed, and changed the orders so Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were executed in his place. During the duel between Hamlet and Laertes, Gertrude accidentally drinks the poisoned wine and both Hamlet and Laertes are fatally wounded with the poisoned blade. Laertes and Hamlet reconcile and Laertes reveals the truth about Claudius' treachery. Hamlet kills Claudius, and dies, leaving Horatio to tell the story of what happened.

**"What is it you would see? If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search."**

HORATIO (ACT V, SCENE 2)

**"Something is rotten in the state of Denmark."**

MARCELLUS (ACT I, SCENE 4)

**"Good night, sweet prince, and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!"**

HORATIO (ACT V, SCENE 2)



**Hamlet:** The young prince of Denmark who is consumed with grief, anger, and suspicion after his father's death. Hamlet is intelligent, sensitive, and tormented by doubts about his own actions.

**Claudius:** Hamlet's uncle and the new king of Denmark, who is secretly responsible for his brother's murder. Claudius is cunning, ambitious, and manipulative.

**Gertrude:** Hamlet's mother, Queen of Denmark, who is torn between her loyalty to her son and her love for her new husband. Gertrude is conflicted and often passive, leading to her becoming a pawn in the political machinations around her.

**Polonius:** A counselor to the king and father to Laertes and Ophelia. Polonius is pompous and long-winded, often giving unwanted advice and interfering in the affairs of others.

**Ophelia:** Polonius's younger daughter and Hamlet's love interest. Ophelia is innocent and naive, and she is driven to madness after the death of her father.

**Laertes:** Polonius's elder daughter and Ophelia's sister. Laertes is rash and impulsive, seeking revenge against Hamlet for the deaths of her father and sister.

**Horatio:** Hamlet's loyal friend and confidante. Horatio is a calming influence on Hamlet and often serves as a voice of reason.

**The Ghost:** The spirit of Hamlet's father, the late King of Denmark, who appears to him and reveals the truth about his murder. The Ghost is a powerful and ominous presence, driving much of the play's action.

**Marcellus:** A soldier who witnesses the appearance of the Ghost.

**Bernardo:** Another soldier who is on guard duty with Marcellus when they first see the Ghost.

**Rosencrantz & Guildenstern:** College friends of Hamlet who are summoned by Claudius to spy on him. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are naive and easily manipulated, serving as tools in the political games of the court.

**The Player King and Queen:** Actors who perform a play within the play, "The Murder of Gonzago", that mirrors the events of Hamlet's life.

**The Gravedigger:** A working man who is responsible for digging graves in the churchyard. The Gravedigger is witty and irreverent, but also somber and philosophical, reflecting on the nature of life and death.

**Osric:** A courtier who delivers a challenge from Claudius to Hamlet to participate in the duel with Laertes. Osric is flamboyant and foppish, reflecting the excesses and decadence of the court.




*\*These are the 16 characters that appear in Teen Touring's 2023 adaptation of Hamlet. The uncut text has 34 characters, more than twice as many!*

# DISCOVERING HAMLET VIDEO SERIES

*In 2021 & 2022, Marin Shakespeare Company produced an educational series exploring Hamlet through an anti-racist lens. This YouTube playlist includes full Hamlet performances, plot summaries, and scene analysis. This project is part of Shakespeare in American Communities, a program of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest.*

**PLAY ALL** →

- [Hamlet, student matinee performance - September 2021](#)
- [\(2017\) "Hamlet" - Shakespeare at Solano Prison, Level 2](#)
- [Intro to Hamlet Plot Summaries](#)
- [\[Shakespeare: The Animated Tales\] Hamlet](#)
- [Hamlet \(Shakespeare\) - Thug Notes Summary and Analysis](#)
- ["Shakespeare's HAMLET" Cliffsnotes' Video Summary](#)
- [Video SparkNotes: Shakespeare's Hamlet Summary](#)
- [Intro to #ToBeBlack](#)
- [#ToBeBlack | The Public Theater](#)
- [Introduction to Sip & Tell Hamlet with Makha Mthembu](#)
- ["Highlights" from HAMLET pt. 1](#)
- ["Highlights" from HAMLET pt. 2](#)
- ["Highlights" from HAMLET pt. 3](#)
- [Act I, Scene 2 Hamlet's "O that this too too sullied flesh would melt"](#)
- [Act I, Scene 3 Polonius' Advice to Laertes](#)
- [Act I, Scene 5 Hamlet and the Ghost and "House of Sueños"](#)
- [Act II, Scene 1 Ophelia and Polonius](#)
- [Act II, Scene 2 Hamlet's "What a piece of work is a man"](#)
- [Act II, Scene 2 Hamlet and Polonius](#)
- [Act III, Scene 1 Ophelia and Hamlet](#)
- [Act III, Scene 2 Hamlet's Advice to the Players](#)
- [Act III, Scene 3 King Claudius](#)
- [Act IV, Scene 7 Claudius and Laertes](#)



*Hamlet has inspired more than 100 films and adaptations since the birth of cinema. Below is a just a partial list. Many of the more recent versions can be found online either in full, or in clips.*

1. **"Hamlet" (1913)** - directed by Hay Plumb, starring Johnston Forbes-Robertson - This silent film adaptation of "Hamlet" was one of the earliest film adaptations of a Shakespeare play.
2. **"Hamlet" (1948)** - directed by Laurence Olivier, starring Laurence Olivier - This film is notable for being the first full-length feature film adaptation of "Hamlet" and for Olivier's acclaimed performance in the title role.
3. **"The Bad Sleep Well" (1960)** - directed by Akira Kurosawa, starring Toshiro Mifune - While not a direct adaptation of "Hamlet," this Japanese film is heavily influenced by the play and features a plot that centers around a son seeking revenge for his father's death.
4. **"Hamlet Goes Business" (1987)** - directed by Aki Kaurismäki - This Finnish black comedy transplants the story of "Hamlet" into the corporate world of modern-day Helsinki.
5. **"Hamlet" (1990)** - directed by Franco Zeffirelli, starring Mel Gibson - This adaptation was filmed on location at a number of Scottish castles and emphasizes the political intrigue and violent action of the story.
6. **"Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead" (1990)** - directed by Tom Stoppard, starring Gary Oldman and Tim Roth - This film adaptation of Stoppard's play is a meta-fictional retelling of "Hamlet" from the perspective of two minor characters.
7. **"The Lion King" (1994)** - directed by Roger Allers and Rob Minkoff, starring Matthew Broderick and Jeremy Irons - While not a direct adaptation of "Hamlet," this Disney animated film is heavily inspired by the play and features a plot that centers around a young lion prince seeking to avenge his father's death.
8. **"Hamlet" (1996)** - directed by Kenneth Branagh, starring Kenneth Branagh - This version is notable for being the only film adaptation of "Hamlet" to include the entire text of the play, clocking in at over 4 hours, as well as for its all-star cast that includes Kate Winslet, Derek Jacobi, and Robin Williams.
9. **"Hamlet" (2000)** - directed by Michael Almereyda, starring Ethan Hawke - This modern-day adaptation sets the story in New York City and incorporates technology such as surveillance cameras and cell phones into the narrative.
10. **"Hamlet" (2009)** - directed by Gregory Doran, starring David Tennant - This filmed stage production from the Royal Shakespeare Company features Tennant's acclaimed performance in the title role and emphasizes the psychological aspects of the play.
11. **"Haider" (2014)** - directed by Vishal Bhardwaj, starring Shahid Kapoor - This Indian adaptation sets the story during the 1995 insurgency in Kashmir and incorporates themes of political violence and corruption.
12. **"Hamlet" (2015)** - directed by Margaret Williams, starring Maxine Peake - This filmed stage production from the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester features a gender-swapped casting of the title role, with Peake delivering a powerful performance.
13. **"Hamlet" (2016)** - Directed by Simon Godwin, starring Paapa Essiedu - This filmed stage production from the Royal Shakespeare Company is significant for its groundbreaking casting of a black actor in the title role, the West African setting, and Essiedu's critically acclaimed, dynamic performance.
14. **"Ophelia" (2018)** - directed by Claire McCarthy, starring Daisy Ridley - While not a direct adaptation of "Hamlet," this film retells the story from the perspective of Ophelia and features Ridley in the lead role.
15. **"Hamlet" (2018)** - Directed by Robert Icke, starring Andrew Scott - This film adaptation of the West End production is known for its fresh and modern take on the play, using contemporary settings and costumes to explore the psychological and political dimensions of the story.
16. **"Hamlet" (2018)** - Directed by Federay Holmes and Elle While, starring Michelle Terry - This filmed stage production from Shakespeare's Globe was unique for its gender-conscious casting, including Terry playing Hamlet, and the male-presenting Shubham Saraf as Ophelia.

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Before the performance:

- What do you already know about the story of *Hamlet*? What are you curious to learn about?
- How do you think watching a live performance differs from reading or watching a film adaptation?
- What do you think are some of the key themes and ideas in *Hamlet*?
- What role do you think theater plays in our society? Why do you think people still perform plays that are hundreds of years old?
- What do you think are some of the challenges of performing a play like *Hamlet*? How do you think actors and directors approach bringing such an iconic story to life?

### After the performance

- How did the live performance compare to your expectations? What surprised you the most?
- How did the actors and director approach the story and characters of *Hamlet*? What creative choices did they make?
- If you have read the play, what are the biggest changes the director made in adapting the text? Why do you think those changes were made?
- How did the live performance differ from reading or watching a film adaptation of *Hamlet*?
- What themes and ideas from the play stood out to you the most? How do you think the actors and directors conveyed these themes on stage?
- What was your favorite scene or moment from the play? Why did it resonate with you?
- What did you learn about theater by watching a live performance? How did it deepen your understanding and appreciation of the play?
- What did you learn about Shakespeare's language by watching a live performance?
- What questions are you left with? What do you wonder about?

### About the play

- Looking at the characters in the play, who are the thinkers and who are the doers? Who primarily analyzes and plans, and who takes action?
- Who “wins” in the end? How?
- Does vengeance equal justice? Is murder ever justified?
- What are some different choices Hamlet could have made to change the outcome of the play? How about Claudius? How about Gertrude?
- How does Hamlet treat the women in his life? How do the women in the play change the trajectory of the action?
- Compare and contrast the ways in which Hamlet, Laertes, and Ophelia deal with the deaths of their fathers.
- Why does Hamlet pretend to be mentally ill? When is Hamlet pretending to be mad and when is he actually experiencing depression, mania, or suicidal thoughts? Does Shakespeare accurately portray mental illness?



# CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

## 15-MINUTE HAMLET

FROM THE FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY

**Grade Levels:** 6-12

**Time:** 40-45 mins

**Materials:** Cards with quotes

The Fifteen-Minute Play is a plot summary intermingled with quotations from the play. It is typically used to introduce students to the play or to prepare them to see a production. You can alter it as you see fit, invent a version of your own for a different play, or have your students create one. Try to keep it as short and simple as possible.

- Create cards for the quotations with the corresponding numbers, shown below, in bold. The cards should be large enough for three to five people to read simultaneously.
- Divide the class into groups and distribute the cards. Each group may have multiple cards.
- Give the groups five to ten minutes to prepare dramatic renditions of their line(s). They can read the line(s) as a chorus, individually, or in sub-groups, but everyone must speak part of the text. Encourage students to physicalize/dramatize the line(s) in some way. Using props is acceptable, but not necessary.
- When the rehearsal period is over, ask everyone to stand in a circle.
- The leader (you, or a student) stands in the circle, too, and reads aloud the script of the story, calling out the numbers of quotations where indicated and pausing for the group responsible for that quotation to step quickly into the center and perform it. The leader should keep a quick, steady pace - the activity is much more fun when it moves right along.

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**(1. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.)** A group of night watchmen and the scholar Horatio are on patrol when they are visited by a ghost of the late King Hamlet. Horatio demands **(2. Stay! Speak! Speak! I charge thee, speak!)**, but **(3. 'Tis gone and will not answer.)**

Hamlet is still angry with his mother **(4. Frailty, thy name is woman!)**, who married his uncle within a month after Hamlet's father's death. As Hamlet is brooding over the fate of his father, Horatio arrives and tells Hamlet about the ghost **(5. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.)**. Hamlet, excited by this information, vows **(6. I'll speak to it)**.

The court councilor, Polonius, advises his son, Laertes, on many things **(7. This above all, to thine own self be true)** as Laertes leaves for France. Laertes has already had words with his sister, Ophelia, about Hamlet's attention to her **(8. fear it, dear sister)**.

Horatio leads Hamlet to the Ghost, who motions for Hamlet to go away with it. Once they're alone, the Ghost tells Hamlet **(9. The serpent that did sting thy father's life now wears his crown.)**, meaning that Hamlet's uncle murdered his father. The Ghost asks Hamlet to **(10. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder!)** and disappears, crying, **(11. Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me.)**.

Hamlet begins acting strangely toward everyone in the castle. Polonius declares **(12. this is madness, yet there is method in 't)** and tells the king and queen how Ophelia rejected Hamlet's romantic advances, and that is the cause of his apparent madness. Claudius and Polonius plot to spy on Hamlet in discussion with Ophelia and they hide behind a curtain.

## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: 15 -MINUTE HAMLET CONTINUED

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As Hamlet contemplates life and death (**13. To be or not to be—that is the question**), Ophelia arrives. (**14. Soft you now, the fair Ophelia.**) Their conversation is bitter, and Hamlet tells her, (**15. Get thee to a nunnery.**) Afterward, Claudius declares, (**16. Love? His affections do not that way tend.**)

Claudius and Gertrude have sent for Hamlet's old friends, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, to find out what's wrong. Sensing his two former friends are spying for the King, Hamlet, distrusts them. He is, however, excited by their news of the arrival of (**17. The best actors in the world.**) He schemes, (**18. I'll have these players play something like the murder of my father before mine uncle.**) Hamlet plans to observe the King's reaction to the play in order to confirm his guilt.

Before the play is over, the King stands up in a rage and orders everyone out (**19. Give me some light. Away!**). Hamlet's suspicions are confirmed. Consumed by guilt, Claudius kneels to pray. Hamlet almost kills him then but decides against it, afraid that killing Claudius mid-prayer would (**20. this same villain send to heaven.**)

Gertrude sends for Hamlet, and an argument between them ensues. Hidden behind a curtain and afraid for Gertrude's safety, Polonius shouts for help. Hamlet thinks it is Claudius behind the curtain (**21. How now, a rat?**), and he stabs Polonius, killing him (**22. Oh, I am slain!**).

Upon learning of Polonius' death, Claudius fears his life is greatly in danger. He decides that he will secretly send word to England ordering (**23. The present death of Hamlet.**) Hamlet leaves for England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, yet on the way, Hamlet learns of the plot. He replaces the King's orders with a new request that the death sentence be carried out on his two friends. Thus, (**24. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead.**) Hamlet then returns to Denmark.

Back at the castle, Ophelia has gone mad over the death of her father (**25. O, this is the poison of deep grief.**) Laertes returns, angry about his father's death and grieved about his sister's insanity. Laertes vows, (**26. Let come what comes, only I'll be revenged most thoroughly.**)

Claudius and Laertes plot that Laertes will kill Hamlet in a fencing match. They decide to exchange the blunt sword tip usually used for sport matches with one that is sharp and, as an extra precaution, the tip will be covered in poison. They will also poison a cup of wine, so that (**27. if he by chance escape your venom'd stuck, our purpose may hold there.**)

Gertrude arrives and announces news of the sad sight she has witnessed (**28. Your sister's drowned, Laertes.**) As the royal family mourns, (**29. Sweets to the sweet, farewell!**) Laertes curses Hamlet (**30. The devil take thy soul!**). Hamlet insists that he loved Ophelia more than Laertes did.

Hamlet accepts the challenge to fence against Laertes. Watching the match, the Queen unknowingly takes a drink of wine from the poisoned cup. Laertes mortally wounds Hamlet, but Hamlet manages to grab the poisoned sword and strike Laertes as well. Laertes admits, (**31. I am justly killed with mine own treachery.**)

The Queen dies (**32. The drink, the drink! I am poisoned.**) The dying Laertes explains (**33. The King, the King's to blame**), and Hamlet kills Claudius, both stabbing him and forcing him to drink the poisoned wine. Hamlet dies soon after, and Horatio mourns (**34. Flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.**) Fortinbras, King of Norway, arrives and takes over Denmark (**35. I embrace my fortune.**)

# CLASSROOM ACTIVITY

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## WHAT IS IN A MEME? TEXT & SUBTEXT

**Grade Levels:** 6-12

**Time:** Two 25-minute lessons, or one 45-minute lesson

**Materials:** Memes, Hamlet/Ophelia Scene

### Introduction (5 Minutes)

- Share a few of your favorite internet memes, including memes related to *Hamlet* (some are included on the next page) and others.
- Discuss the images in the memes and what makes them “meme-able”: open to many interpretations, simple storytelling, symbols of shared meaning, etc.
- Discuss the meaning of subtext: How often do you say something other than what you mean? In *Hamlet*, what are some examples of large gaps between what is meant and what is spoken aloud?

### Make a Hamlet Meme (20 minutes)

- Display the blank memes on the following pages (or pick other popular meme templates from [imgflip.com/memegenerator](http://imgflip.com/memegenerator)). In groups, partners, or individually, ask the students to choose one of the images and generate the text to turn it into a meme related to the themes or characters in *Hamlet*. Give them 5-10 minutes to craft their text.
- Ask each group/student to present their text for their meme. Discuss their choice of image and text. What about the image inspired them or reminded them of an element of the play? Is this new meme funny and does it make sense to the other students? How do memes relate to subtext?
- Extension: Use the meme generator on [imgflip.com/memegenerator](http://imgflip.com/memegenerator) to add the text to the image and share the new memes. *\* We would love to see your memes! Please share them with us by emailing Education Director Elana Kepner at [education@marinshakespeare.org](mailto:education@marinshakespeare.org) and you may see them featured on IG for #mememonday!*

### The Break-Up Text (20 minutes)

- Read the following cutting of the *Hamlet/ Ophelia* break-up scene (Act 3, Scene 1) aloud. You can also read an uncut version of the scene or a portion, depending on your student’s interest and how deep you want to dive.
- Discuss the subtext of the scene: What do Hamlet and Ophelia want to say? What do they say instead? How does the awareness of being watched by Polonius and Claudius change the way they speak to each other?
- In groups, pairs, or as individuals ask the students to write a text that Hamlet would send to Ophelia, or Ophelia would send to Hamlet, ending their relationship. Ask them to consider that someone else might read this text like Polonius, Gertrude, or Claudius. How might it change the way you write the text? What is unspoken in this text?
- Ask a few students/ groups to read their texts aloud. Discuss.

## Hamlet Memes



SparkNotes  
@SparkNotes

Hamlet: Let's watch a play about a guy who murders his political rival by poisoning him.

Claudius, sprinting out of the room at full speed:

What's going on?

- It's annoying or not interesting
- I'm in this photo and I don't like it
- I think it shouldn't be on Facebook
- It's spam

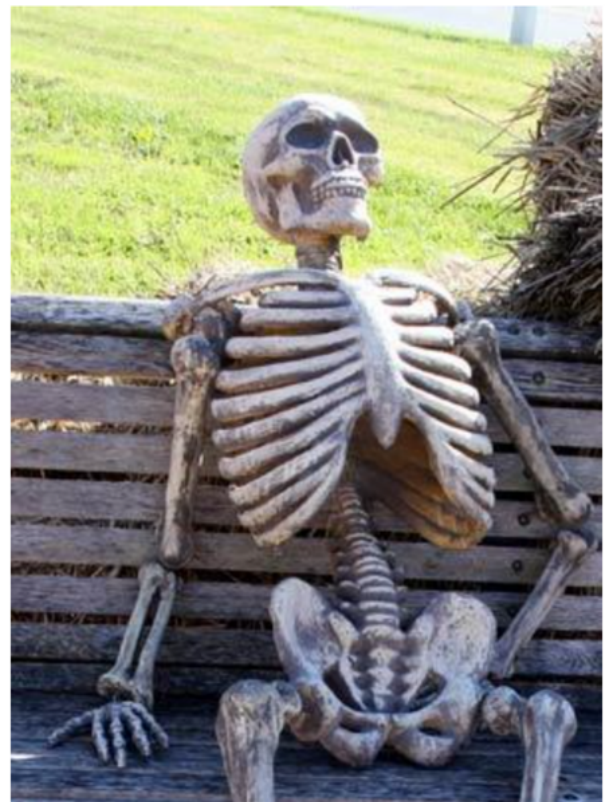
## Meme Templates





# CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: WHAT'S IN A MEME? CONTINUED

## More Meme Templates





## CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: WHAT'S IN A MEME? CONTINUED

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### *Hamlet/ Ophelia Break Up Scene (Act 3, Scene 1)*

HAMLET Soft you now!  
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd

OPHELIA My lord, I have remembrances of yours,  
That I have longed long to re-deliver;  
I pray you, now receive them.

HAMLET No, not I; I never gave you aught.

OPHELIA My honour'd lord, you know right well you did.

HAMLET Ha, ha! are you honest?

OPHELIA My lord?

HAMLET Are you fair?

OPHELIA What means your lordship?

HAMLET That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no  
discourse to your beauty. I did love you once.

OPHELIA Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

HAMLET You should not have believed me; I loved you not. Get thee to a  
nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners?. Where's your father?

OPHELIA At home, my lord.

HAMLET Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere  
but in's own house.

OPHELIA O, help him, you sweet heavens!

HAMLET Get thee to a Nunnery. Go, Farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs Marry,  
marry a fool: for Wise men know well enough, what monsters you make of  
them. To a Nunnery, go, and quickly too.

[EXIT HAMLET]



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With Shakespeare as our endless inspiration, our mission is to serve as a vibrant catalyst for cultural engagement, education, and social justice to benefit the people of Marin County, the San Francisco Bay Area, and beyond.

*We acknowledge the Coast Miwok people, on whose unceded lands this organization resides.*

**PLAYING FOR GOOD**  
**ARTS | EDUCATION | SOCIAL JUSTICE**