

**Study Guide Questions for *Hamlet***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

As you read the play, answer the following questions. Some of the questions will ask you simple questions about what is happening in the play, whereas others will ask you to think deeper and explore the text's meanings.

**Act I Scene I**

1. Shakespeare's plays were performed in daylight. How does the opening dialogue make the audience aware of time, place, and atmosphere?

2. How do the sentries seem to feel? How do you know?

3. How do Horatio's attitudes toward the ghost shift as the scene develops? What does Horatio repeatedly ask the ghost to do?

4. Explain Horatio's allusion to a famous Roman general.

5. At the end of the scene what does Horatio intend to do?

**Act I Scene II**

6. King Claudius opens with a lengthy speech. What subjects does he discuss? What impression is he trying to generate? Why?

7. What do both Claudius and Gertrude want from Hamlet? Is their desire reasonable?

8. How would you describe the relationship of Horatio and Hamlet?

9. In Hamlet's first soliloquy, what does he reveal that he wants? Why? Are his feelings completely abnormal?

10. In his soliloquy, Hamlet gives a fairly clear account of events of the past two months. What happened?

### **Act I Scene III**

11. The last three lines before Polonius's farewell to Laertes are very famous. Rephrase them in your own words. What are some other possible interpretations of these lines?

12. What words would you use to describe Ophelia? Why?

13. What does Polonius order Ophelia to do? How does she respond?

14. In what ways might the comments of both her brother and her father be damaging to Ophelia?

#### **Act I Scenes IV and V**

15. Why does Horatio try to prevent Hamlet from going with the ghost?

16. What does the ghost say about Queen Gertrude?

17. From Hamlet's second soliloquy, we learn that he has many memories. What does he intend to do with them?

#### **Act II**

18. How does Polonius explain Hamlet's strange behavior?

19. How would you describe the interaction between Hamlet and Polonius?

20. In Hamlet's third soliloquy, what is he upset about? What has provoked this frustration?

21. We see Hamlet alone here, with no audience for his madness. Does he seem crazy?

22. Why does Hamlet feel he should not seek revenge immediately?

23. What plan has Hamlet concocted at the end of his soliloquy?

#### **Act III Scene I**

24. Is Ophelia wrong to cooperate with Claudius and Polonius? Why or why not?

25. Put the first sentence of Hamlet's fourth soliloquy into your own words.

26. According to Hamlet, what would make a person want to avoid death?

#### **Act III Scene II**

27. What directives does Hamlet give the actors? Why?

28. Explain Hamlet's demeanor with his mother and with Ophelia.