

Folio 400



To be OR  
NOT TO BE



# HAMLET

## - THE BIG QUESTION

A Key Stage 2 PSHE and Citizenship Resource



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We have been kindly supported by The Big Give, who profile the work of thousands of charities and their projects, providing a platform to promote causes and inspire people to give. We are very grateful to everyone who supported our work through The Big Give.

The logo for 'What you WILL'. It features a bright yellow circle with a teal feather graphic. The words 'What you' are written in a teal, sans-serif font, and 'WILL' is written in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font. The feather is positioned between 'you' and 'WILL'. There are some black ink splatters at the base of the feather.

## Curriculum Links

This KS2 Citizenship and English teaching sequence provides lessons to teach pupils about forming and talking about their opinions. It uses Shakespeare's **Hamlet** to look at the way in which people do what they are told and whether this is always the right thing to do.

There are various opportunities to meet KS2 National Curriculum English requirements, including study of a significant author, drama, writing, and spoken language opportunities.

**In addition, the lesson sequence includes opportunities to meet KS2 Citizenship curriculum requirements, giving children opportunities to:**

- Talk and write about their opinions, and explain their views, on issues that affect themselves and society.
- Prepare to play an active role as citizens by researching, discussing and debating issues.
- Reflect on spiritual, moral, social, and cultural issues, using imagination to understand other people's experiences.
- Resolve differences by looking at alternatives, making decisions and explaining choices.
- Understand that pressure to behave in an unacceptable or risky way can come from a variety of sources, including people they know, and how to ask for help and use basic techniques for resisting pressure to do wrong.
- Understand that actions affect themselves and others, to care about other people's feelings and to try to see things from their points of view.

**Examples of actions schools can take to promote Fundamental British values, include:**

- Ensuring all pupils within the school have a voice that is listened to, and demonstrating how democracy works by actively promoting democratic processes such as a school council whose members are voted for by the pupils.



**Before you start this lesson and delve into the Big Question in the play, you might want to familiarise yourself with the story first.**

- There are lots of different approaches you could take, including using the 10 point summary.
- If you or your students don't know the play, the following process is a great introduction to the story and its main characters.
- As with any lesson, do adapt this to suit the needs of your students.
- This is a great way to get the story on its feet quickly and help your students to understand the story arc.

**Firstly, divide your students into groups and give them copies of the 10 point summary to explore the story order.**

- Cut up and remove the numbers from the 10 point summary.
- Give each group a few minutes to rearrange them into the correct order.
- You could print a large copy of the 10 point summary so that each one is on an A3 page and when you go through the order with the whole class you can stick them up in the correct order around the room.
- Correct any misconceptions as you go through the points and ask your students to justify and clarify the decisions they made.
- This will support with comprehension work across English as there are some key indicators of the story structure (E.g. Romeo and Juliet can only get married once they have met, Macbeth can only become King once he has killed the King).

**Once the correct order has been established, give each group two consecutive story points and ask them to create freeze frames to show this moment. Provide them with the following two rules:**

1. Everyone must be involved.
  2. Someone/some people must read out the story point.
- Give them a strict time limit to create the freeze frame, before moving onto their second one.
  - Ask them to consider what else they could be if there are only a small amount of named characters in the scene - could they create the architecture or double up on characters?
  - After the time limit is up, give them a further two minutes to consider how they would adjust their positions so that the rest of the class can see the whole image – ask them to consider their audience.
  - With the rest of the class watching, move from one group to another, seeing each freeze frame in order and hearing the story point. Then jump into the image to 'Thought tap' some (or all ideally) of the characters.
  - It's really encouraging for students if they can share their ideas regardless of their character E.g. Macbeth or one of his soldiers.
  - Ask them open questions about who they are, what they are doing and how they feel about it. Facilitate this in a light-hearted way to avoid the students feeling under pressure.



- If they struggle with an answer, throw the question out to the rest of the group and the audience.
- This is a great opportunity to get some interpretations of characters' thoughts and actions, but do use it to clarify facts about the story and the characters too.
- It is also a great time to show that you don't have all of the answers either and that you will all find out more as you delve further into the play and rehearsals.
- You could do this 'Thought Tapping' as a 'Roving Reporter', using a prop as a microphone to interview the characters as if live in that moment.

**Once you have done this for each of the 10 images, bring the class back together for a plenary.**

This is a good time to recap on what they have learnt about the characters and/or the story. This could be done in a number of ways:

- 1. Tell the story in a circle.** Everyone sits in a circle and adds a bit more information on the previous person's ideas. This means that those that have a good grasp will be able to share their knowledge and those who are still working towards it, will be able to add whatever they can – such as a character name or a setting for the play.
- 2. Provide them with plenary cards.** Use the following examples and ask them to share their response with someone else.
  - Something they have learnt today; a new word or phrase that they have used today; something that they would like to know more about; something that they are looking forward to in the play; a question that they now have about the play.
- 3. Learnt and enjoyed.** Simply ask for them to tell a partner something that they have learnt and something that they have enjoyed in this lesson



# The Big Question - Hamlet

<p><b>Learning Objective</b></p> <p>Pupils use a range of balanced and persuasive argument techniques across a range of drama activities to formulate a viewpoint and argument related to the Big Question for this lesson.</p> <p>Pupils analyse the actions of Hamlet and whether he was right to listen to his father's ghost.</p> <p><b>Success Criteria (including differentiation)</b></p> <p><b>All children</b> can express an initial opinion on the 'Big Question' and justify their viewpoint.</p> <p><b>Most children</b> can develop their opinion over the course of the lesson sequence by listening and responding to others.</p> <p><b>Some children</b> can articulate a clear balanced argument on the 'Big Question' using sophisticated argument techniques.</p>	<p><b>Big Question: Should I always do as I am told?</b></p> <p><b>Vocabulary:</b> Reliable, revenge, deliberation, conscience, hotseating, role on the wall</p> <p><b>Starter:</b> Exploring obedience – Prompt a discussion with the class to lead into the Big Question.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the students to consider their response to the Big Question by placing themselves on a Value Continuum.</li> <li>• Through discussion, ask pupils for their reaction to the behaviour of Hamlet with regard to the killing of Polonius.</li> <li>• They feed back to the rest of the class regarding the relationship between Hamlet and his stepfather using key facts from the play.</li> <li>• Pupils explore the character of Hamlet, thinking about everything he has gone through using roles on the wall and two text extracts from the play. They feed back to the rest of the class regarding the difference between the Hamlet presented to the world and the one he keeps to himself.</li> <li>• Pupils hot-seat Hamlet to find out more about his motivations regarding his relationship with his uncle.</li> <li>• Pupils take part in a conscience alley to advise Hamlet what he should do about his uncle when he hears that he has killed his father.</li> <li>• <i>Optional written activity. Pupils write either a balanced argument or a persuasive argument, taking a stance on the behaviour of Hamlet based on what he heard and the evidence he had.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>See Teaching and Learning Activities for full details</b></p>	<p><b>Assessment Opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value continuum</li> <li>• Role on the wall</li> <li>• Hot-seating and conscience alley</li> <li>• Follow up written work (persuasive or balanced argument)</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>10 point summary</b></li> <li>• <b>Five Facts about Hamlet and Claudius's relationship</b></li> <li>• <b>Two Text Extracts</b></li> <li>• <b>Role on the Wall Templates</b></li> <li>• <b>Question stems for hotseating</b></li> <li>• <b>Sentence starters (balanced and persuasive arguments)</b></li> </ul> <p><b>KS2 English Curriculum Links (Y5/6 Programme of Study) Pupils:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase their familiarity with a wide range of books including fiction from our literary heritage</li> <li>• drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence</li> <li>• provide reasoned justifications for their views</li> <li>• articulate and justify answers, arguments and opinions</li> <li>• participate in discussions, performances, role play/improvisations and debates</li> <li>• Use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, imagining and exploring ideas</li> </ul>
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# Teaching and Learning Activities

## Starter – Exploring Obedience

- Show your class a small list of things you are told to do every day (such as drive at the speed limit, do the register, not make loud noise after 11pm, park in between the lines).
- Ask them what all of these things they have in common.
- Now ask your students to create a list of 10 things **they** are told to do every day, you could mind map some altogether first or give them ideas (told by parents, teachers, friends, schools staff, coaches, siblings, council, government etc.)
- When they have a list of things, ask who tells them to do these things? Why do they ask them?
- Ask pupils to think about circumstances where people ask others to do things. Is there anything on there that you shouldn't do? Why is this? Do these circumstances differ according to the age of those involved?

## Teaching and Learning Activity One - Value Continuum

- Introduce the concept of a Value Continuum by asking pupils to imagine that the room is bisected diagonally, with one corner of the room representing “Strongly Agree” and the other corner of the room representing “Strongly Disagree”.
- Explain to the pupils that you will give them a statement, and that they must stand somewhere on the imaginary line. They don't have to stand in the corners. Demonstrate where they might stand if they agree quite strongly, or if they disagreed slightly more than they agreed with a statement.
- Now give them an example statement so they can see how it works. E.g. ‘Breakfast the most important meal of the day’ or ‘Cats are better than Dogs’. Take views from different places on the line, encouraging pupils to articulate their feelings.
- Once they are used to how it works, ask them the ‘Big Question’ **‘Should always do as I am told?’** and to move to where they think they should be. Ask for responses and for the reasoning for their thoughts.



## Teaching and Learning Activity Two - Exploring Hamlet and Claudius

- Next, give each group one of the **Five Facts about Hamlet and Claudius's relationship** to share with the class. These facts contextualise the relationship between the two characters up until Hamlet has staged a re-enactment of Claudius murdering his father. What do we know for sure? What can we deduce from what we know? How does the relationship change or develop between the two of them? What are the strengths and weaknesses of it? How do they think it will end between them? Why has the Hamlet staged this show?
- It might help to draw a family tree with the class and ask how Hamlet might be feeling after his uncle married his mother. How has this changed him? How might he behave?
- Ask pupils for their reaction to the behaviour of Hamlet and his plan to revenge his father. Show the following statement: **'Hamlet plots harm against Claudius. He is violent and unstable'** and record their thoughts on the whiteboard.

## Teaching and Learning Activity Three – Role on the Wall

- First create a shared **Role on the Wall** for Claudius, exploring what the character is like on the inside (inner thoughts and feelings) and the outside (what he shows to the world).
- E.g. Claudius– *Inside the figure* – Nervous of being found out, pleased that his actions have led to his marriage and the throne, terrified of the consequences of his actions in the afterlife.
- *Outside the figure* – Wants to appear in control, that he cares about Hamlet and he is a better ruler than Hamlet's father.
- Hand out the **Two Text Extracts** – one showing some of Hamlet's tormented thoughts and the other from after the re-enactment when Claudius has revealed his guilt.
- Lead pupils in a discussion about the difference between the two different Hamlets.
- Now, divide pupils into groups – with one set of groups creating a Role on the Wall for Hamlet from the beginning and one set of groups creating a Role on the Wall for Hamlet after his plan has worked. Use the **Role on the Wall Template**.
- Ask children to create their own Role on the Wall for whichever Hamlet they have been allocated, with the characteristics, hopes, fears and personal desires of Hamlet written on the inside of the figure. On the outside of the figure, children provide details of how the character wishes to appear to others.
- Once complete, share them with the entire class and discuss the different 'Hamlets' that have been created. What similarities and differences are there?





## Teaching and Learning Activity Four – Hotseating

This exercise allows pupils to get to know characters by asking questions and hearing them speak outside of the parameters of the story.

- The teacher should initially play the role of Hamlet.
- Ask pupils to think about what they already know about Hamlet up to this point in the story, using their existing knowledge and their role on the wall. What would they like to know about what he wants and how he feels at this point in the story, especially with regard to his relationship with his uncle?
- Provide open ended **question stems for hot-seating** to ensure that pupils use high order questions and not simply questions that can be answered yes or no.
- Have pupils work in groups to create their questions. Aim for 4 or 5 questions from each group.
- Pupils vote for the ‘juiciest’ questions in their groups - the ones likely to generate the most interesting answers. These are likely to be about character motivation/ feelings/hopes and wishes, rather than factual questions such as “What did you have for lunch today?”
- Teacher in role to answer questions.
- After the teacher has answered a few questions in role, invite pupils to hot seat each other, first on their tables, in pairs, with one child asking and the other answering questions in role. Then, invite students to the front of the class to show their hot-seating discussions if they feel confident.

## Teaching and Learning Activity Five - Conscience Alley

- Pupils take part in a conscience alley to advise Hamlet what he should do about Claudius when he has seen his stepfather react to the re-enactment.
- Explain that Hamlet faces a decision – either to listen to his father’s ghost and punish Claudius, or to let him go unpunished.
- Ask children to work in pairs to provide advice to Hamlet.
- They must justify their decision with reference to the text or with reference to their own moral viewpoint.
- Justification is essential so therefore ask the children to practise doing this with their viewpoint, with their partner.
- The teacher should then play the part of Hamlet.
- Pupils who think that he should do as his father told him and punish Claudius should stand on one side.
- Pupils who think that he should ignore his father’s ghost, should stand on the other side.
- As the teacher moves along the tunnel, they should pause at every point and listen to the justifications from both sides.



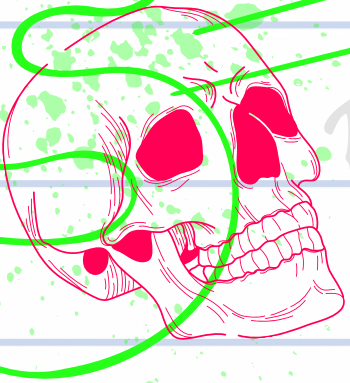
- It is vital that this is done slowly so that every point and justification is heard (otherwise this can be a very noisy and unproductive exercise!)

**Written Follow up** Children write a balanced argument giving both viewpoints to Hamlet. The Resources section contains **Sentence starters (balanced and persuasive arguments)**.

### **Plenary**

Return to the Big Question and the Value Continuum. **'Should I always do as I am told?'** Has anyone changed their minds? Interrogate how their understanding of Hamlet's behaviour has influenced their decision.





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NOT TO BE

Appendix 1

# HAMLET

THE BIG QUESTION

Resources Pack

What **YOU**  
**WILL**



# Hamlet

## 10 Events

1. On King Hamlet's death, his brother Claudius succeeds to the Danish throne and marries King Hamlet's wife, Gertrude.
2. The old King's grieving son, Prince Hamlet is told by his father's ghost that he was murdered by Claudius. Hamlet swears to seek revenge on his uncle.
3. Ophelia is Hamlet's sweetheart and her Father, Polonius, is the King's counsellor. Her brother, Laertes, departs to France. Polonius and Laertes forbid Ophelia to have further dealings with Hamlet.
4. Hamlet feigns madness to protect himself. Queen Gertrude and Polonius orchestrate and spy on a meeting between Hamlet and Ophelia to discover the source of this insanity.
5. Hamlet abuses and rejects Ophelia.
6. Hamlet restages the murder of his father and convinces himself of Claudius' guilt.
7. Hamlet accidentally kills Polonius and is banished to England by Claudius, who plots to have him murdered in transit.
8. Ophelia, driven insane by the death of her father, commits suicide.
9. Laertes swears revenge on Hamlet, who has returned from England. Laertes and Claudius conspire to poison him in a friendly duel.
10. During the duel, Gertrude mistakenly drinks poison meant for Hamlet. Laertes cheats and both he and Claudius are killed by the dying Prince.



## Five Facts about Hamlet and Claudius's relationship

1. Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark is the son of King Hamlet and Queen Gertrude.
2. King Hamlet was recently killed by Claudius, his power-hungry brother. Claudius is now the King and has since married Queen Gertrude (who does not know of Claudius's crime). Hamlet is not happy about this marriage as he thinks that their wedding happened too soon after his father's funeral.
3. The ghost of Hamlet's father appears and tells Hamlet that Claudius murdered him. He demands that Hamlet seek revenge on his brother (Prince Hamlet's uncle and new Step-Dad).
4. Hamlet is known for his indecisiveness and often thinks about things too much. He spends a lot of time arguing with himself about whether he should kill Claudius.
5. Hamlet and Claudius's relationship is very tense as they both plot against each other. Hamlet plans to murder his uncle, Claudius banishes Hamlet to England and later arranges for him to be killed in a duel with Laertes.



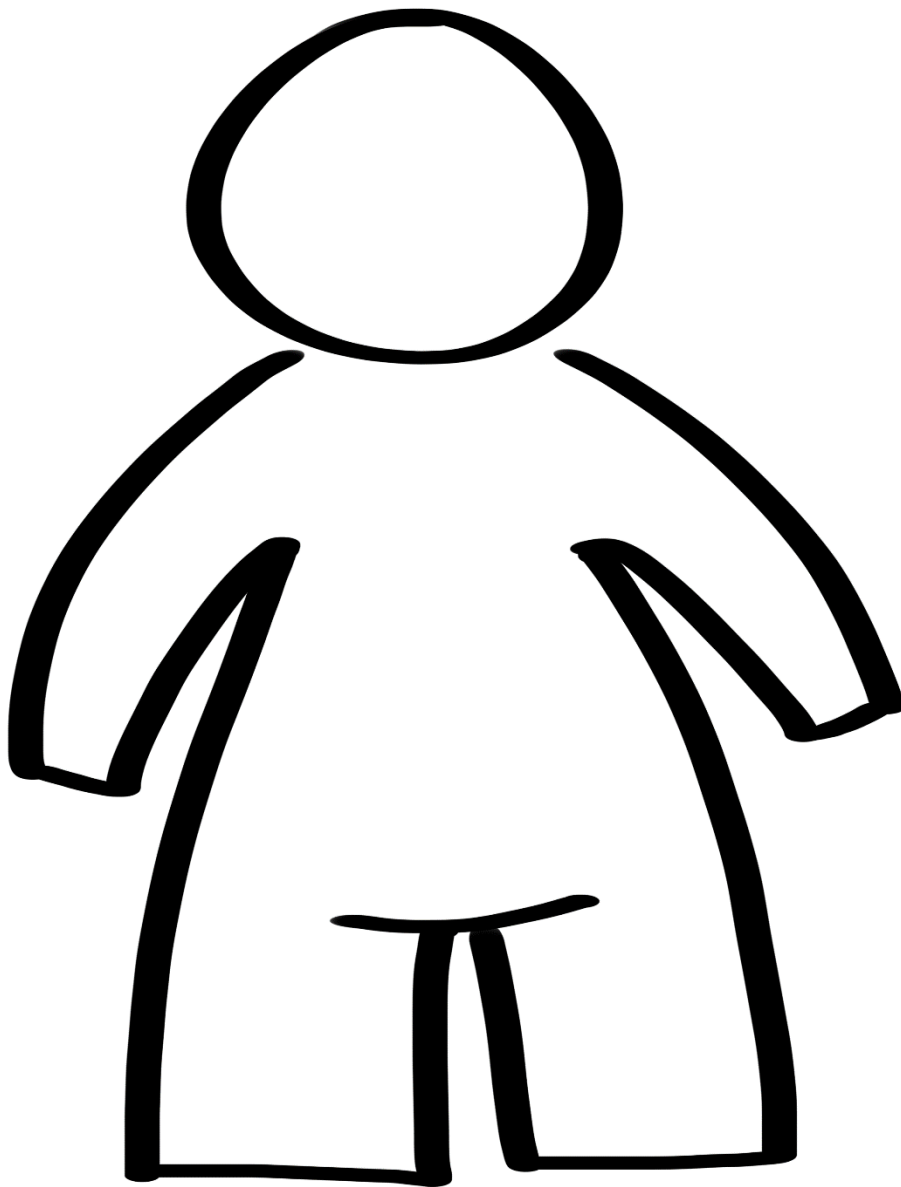
## Role on the Wall Template: (for whole class modelling)

### **INSIDE the outline:**

- How the character feels about him/herself/ other people.
- What the character thinks about his/her life and/or events.
- His or her dreams and regrets.

### **OUTSIDE the outline:**

- What other people think about the character.
- Story/plotline about the character.



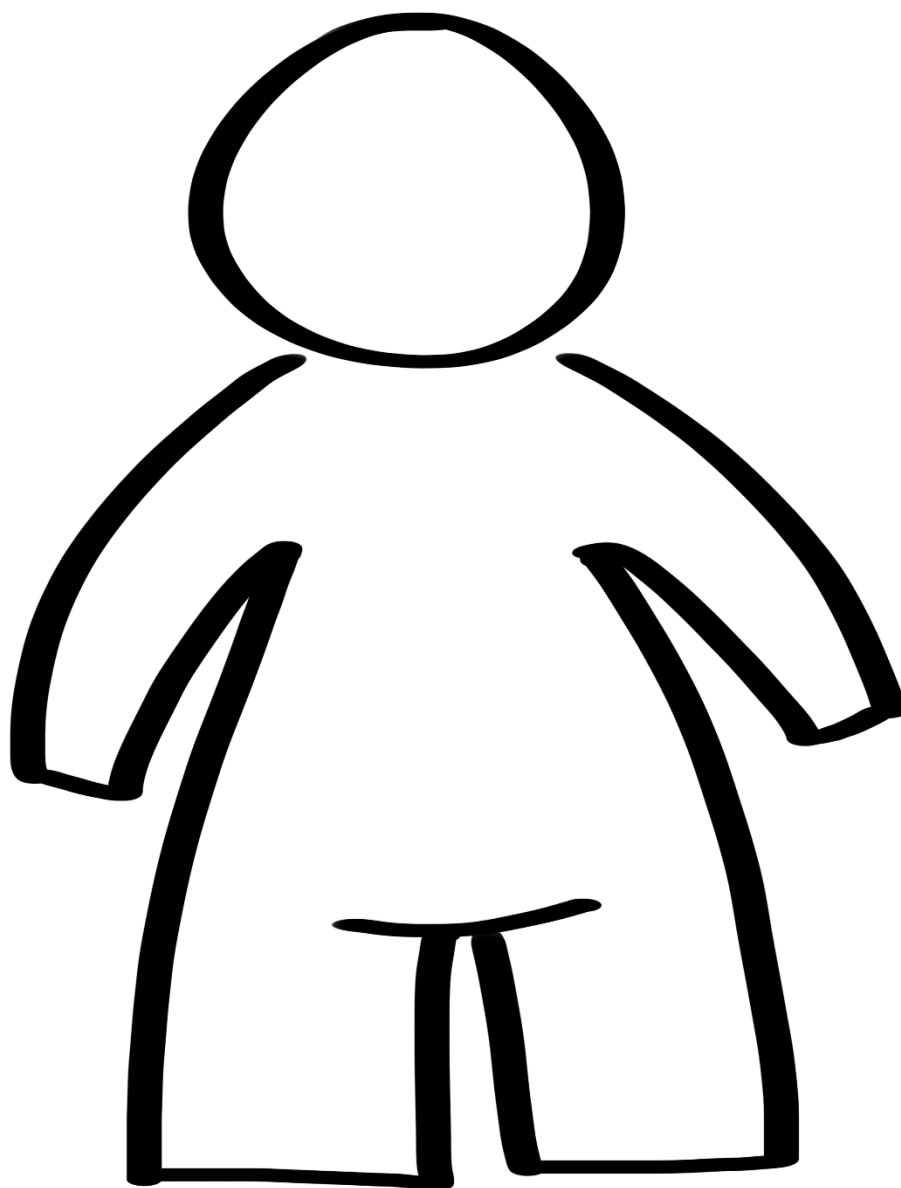
## Role on the Wall Template: (for group work)

### **INSIDE** the outline:

- How the character feels about him/herself/ other people.
- What the character thinks about his/her life and/or events.
- His or her dreams and regrets.

### **OUTSIDE** the outline:

- What other people think about the character.
- Story/plotline about the character.



## Two Text Extracts –

### **Extract 1 – Hamlet’s tormented thoughts (Scene 7)**

*[Enter HAMLET]*

HAMLET 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.  
**[Pause]** To die, to sleep;  
To sleep, perchance to dream – ay, there’s the rub:  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
Must give us pause.  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought.

### **Extract 2– Claudius reveals his guilt (Scene 9)**

*[Enter CLAUDIUS alone]*

CLAUDIUS O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal eldest curse upon’t –  
A brother’s murder.  
But oh, what form of prayer can serve my turn? “Forgive me my foul  
murder”?  
O wretched state! Help angels, make assay. Bow stubborn knees, all  
may be well.

*[He kneels]*

*[Enter HAMLET who sees CLAUDIUS at prayer.]*

HAMLET Now might I do it pat. Now he is a-praying.  
And so I am revenged. But am I then revenged to take him in the  
purging of his soul? No  
Up, sword and know thou a more horrid hent<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wait for a more horrible (and therefore better) time to kill him.





## Question Stems for Hot-seating

How did you feel when...?

Why did you feel...?

Why do you think.....?

Why did you.....?

In what ways does.....?

Explain how.....?

What might.....?

Describe what...

If you were....

What do you think about...?

Have you ever...?

Do you agree that...?



## Sentence Starters: Balanced and persuasive arguments

<b>Some people believe that...</b>	<b>Others think that...</b>
<b>On the one hand...</b>	<b>On the other hand...</b>
<b>It is clear that...</b>	<b>On the contrary...</b>
<b>There is no doubt that...</b>	<b>Alternatively...</b>
<b>Whilst some argue that...</b>	<b>Many maintain that...</b>
<b>It is certain that...</b>	<b>But other facts show...</b>
<b>It could be argued that...</b>	<b>However...</b>

