Hamlet Basics

- Lesson Plan
- Viewing Guide
- Worksheet
- Activity
- Check Your Knowledge
Hamlet Basics
Lesson Plan

Video: 15 minutes  Lesson: 35 minutes

Pre-viewing
• :00 Warm-up: Ask students to discuss the phrase “I don’t get mad—I get even.” Ask students to name some possible consequences of someone plotting revenge against another person. 2 minutes

• :02 Pre-test: Go over the learning objectives. 2 minutes

Viewing
• :04 Playing Video: Hand out Viewing Guide. Go over Viewing Questions and expectations. Tell the students to pay attention to the program and answer the questions while watching. Don’t hesitate to stop the program and review if the students seem confused. 15 minutes

• :19 Question & Answer Session: Ask the class the Viewing Questions. See if any parts of the program were difficult or confusing for the students. Ask a few questions to check their understanding of the key topics. 4 minutes

Sample Questions
1. What type of play is Hamlet?
2. Where is the play set?
3. Whose death is Hamlet mourning at the beginning of the play?

Handouts
• :23 Practicing Material: Hand out the Worksheet and give the class 5-7 minutes to complete it. Students are allowed to use their Viewing Guides. Monitor the students’ progress, helping where needed. Go over Worksheet as a class. 10 minutes

• :33 Applying Material: Separate the class into groups of four. Hand out the “Hamlet Needs Therapy” Activity and the example sheet to each group. There are four different versions of the Activity. Have the students write a modern-day dialogue that might take place between Hamlet and a psychiatrist. If time permits, have groups present their dialogue to the class. 14 minutes

• :47 Wrap-up: Briefly sum up what has been covered in class by prompting students to list the main points covered. Assign any homework. 3 minutes

Viewing Questions Answer Key
1. Who is Hamlet’s mother married to? Claudius, the newly crowned King of Denmark
2. Who is Polonius? a councillor to the king; his right-hand man
3. What does the ghost demand that Hamlet do? he demands that Hamlet avenge his father’s murder

Teacher Notes:
Learning Objectives
At the end of the module, students will be able to:
• explain the plot of Hamlet
• explain the major themes of the play
• identify the main characters of Hamlet
• analyze the character of Hamlet

Materials
• Video: The plot of Hamlet, Hamlet’s character; 15 minutes
• Viewing Guide: The plot of Hamlet, the characters of Hamlet, tragic figure test, Hamlet’s character;
  3 Viewing Questions
• Worksheet: “Hamlet Puzzle”
• Activity: “Hamlet Needs Therapy”
• Check Your Knowledge: 50 points

Background
None required.

Preparation
None required.

Extension
Have students bring in newspaper, magazine, or Internet articles containing examples of people that have been wronged. Should the person seek revenge? Why or why not? Would they be justified in seeking revenge?
Plot Summary

Act One
King Hamlet is dead; Prince Hamlet is upset that his mother has married his uncle, Claudius. Sentries inform Hamlet that the ghost of his dead father roams the castle. Later, the ghost appears to Hamlet and tells him that Claudius killed him and demands that Hamlet avenge his death.

Act Two
Claudius summons Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet’s school friends, to the castle to spy on him. A group of actors arrive at the castle and Hamlet arranges for them to perform *The Murder of Gonzago*, along with additional lines he has written. Hamlet hopes to prove Claudius’s guilt by watching his reaction to the play.

Act Three
The players perform the play which portrays King Hamlet’s death. Claudius gets upset and leaves the room, which confirms his guilt in Hamlet’s eyes. Out of concern for Hamlet’s welfare, Queen Gertrude meets with Hamlet in her chambers. Polonius eavesdrops behind a curtain. Hearing Polonius, Hamlet stabs through the curtain, killing him.

Act Four
Grief-stricken by his father’s death, Laertes asks Claudius’s assistance in punishing his father’s murderer. Claudius sends Hamlet to England, under the pretense of protecting his life; in reality, Claudius has asked the King of England to kill Prince Hamlet.

Act Five
Ophelia goes mad and drowns herself in a stream outside the castle. Hamlet and Laertes duel, and both are mortally wounded. The Queen drinks wine from a cup poisoned by Claudius and dies.

Laertes reveals Claudius’s wicked plans for the exhibition duel, in which Laertes has used a sword dipped in poison. Hamlet stabs Claudius and makes him drink from the poisoned cup of wine; Hamlet and Laertes forgive each other and die.

Horatio eulogizes over Hamlet’s corpse.
If you think Hamlet is puzzling, try this. Complete the crossword puzzle.

Across
2. the son of Polonius
6. the Queen of Denmark and widow of the late king; now wife of Claudius
9. councillor to the king; his right-hand man
10. “To be or _____ _____ be”
11. the prince of Denmark and son of the late king
12. the setting of Hamlet
13. Shakespeare’s play Hamlet is categorized as a _____________.

Down
1. one of Hamlet’s “school chums”
3. the tip of this was dipped in poison, resulting in the deaths of both Laertes and Hamlet
4. the newly crowned king of Denmark and Hamlet’s uncle
5. the daughter of Polonius
6. a phenomenon seen as a sign of good or evil
7. the Prince of Norway
8. Hamlet was sent here by Claudius
If you think Hamlet is puzzling, try this. Complete the crossword puzzle.

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Hamlet Needs Therapy

“Hamlet and his Mom”

It’s pretty obvious that Hamlet had a lot on his mind. Write a modern-day dialogue that might take place between Hamlet and a psychiatrist when he learns of his mother’s marriage to his uncle. Remember, the sky’s the limit. The therapy session can be funny or serious. It’s your call. Warning: Be prepared to read the dialogue in class.

PSYCHOLOGIST: _____________________________

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HAMLET: _____________________________

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PSYCHOLOGIST: _____________________________

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HAMLET: _____________________________

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PSYCHOLOGIST: _____________________________

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HAMLET: _____________________________

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PSYCHOLOGIST: _____________________________

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HAMLET: _____________________________

______________________________
Hamlet Needs Therapy

“Hamlet and the Ghost”

It’s pretty obvious that Hamlet had a lot on his mind. Write a modern-day dialogue that might take place between Hamlet and a psychiatrist after Hamlet speaks to his father’s ghost. Remember, the sky’s the limit. The therapy session can be funny or serious. It’s your call. Warning: Be prepared to read the dialogue in class.

PSYCHOLOGIST: __________________________________________________________

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HAMLET: ........................................................................................................

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PSYCHOLOGIST: __________________________________________________________

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HAMLET: ........................................................................................................

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PSYCHOLOGIST: __________________________________________________________

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PSYCHOLOGIST: __________________________________________________________

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HAMLET: ........................................................................................................

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Hamlet Needs Therapy

“Hamlet and Claudius”

It’s pretty obvious that Hamlet had a lot on his mind. Write a modern-day dialogue that might take place between Hamlet and a psychiatrist after Hamlet sees Claudius praying and decides not to kill him (III, iii). Remember, the sky’s the limit. The therapy session can be funny or serious. It’s your call. Warning: Be prepared to read the dialogue in class.

PSYCHOLOGIST: _____________________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________________

HAMLET: __________________________________________________________________________________

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PSYCHOLOGIST: _____________________________________________________________________________

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HAMLET: __________________________________________________________________________________

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PSYCHOLOGIST: _____________________________________________________________________________

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HAMLET: __________________________________________________________________________________

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PSYCHOLOGIST: _____________________________________________________________________________

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HAMLET: __________________________________________________________________________________
Hamlet Needs Therapy

“Hamlet kills Polonius”

It’s pretty obvious that Hamlet had a lot on his mind. Write a modern-day dialogue that might take place between Hamlet and a psychiatrist after Hamlet mistakenly kills Polonius (III, iv). Remember, the sky’s the limit. The therapy session can be funny or serious. It’s your call. Warning: Be prepared to read the dialogue in class.

PSYCHOLOGIST: _____________________________________________________________

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HAMLET: ________________________________________________________________

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PSYCHOLOGIST: ____________________________________________________________

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HAMLET: ________________________________________________________________

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HAMLET: ________________________________________________________________

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HAMLET: ________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________________
Hamlet Needs Therapy

"Hamlet and his Mom"

It's pretty obvious that Hamlet had a lot on his mind. Write a modern-day dialogue that might take place between Hamlet and a psychiatrist when he learns of his mother's marriage to his uncle. Remember, the sky's the limit. The therapy session can be funny or serious. It's your call. Warning: Be prepared to read the dialogue in class.

PSYCHOLOGIST: “Tell me what’s on your mind, Hamlet.”

HAMLET: “If it isn’t one thing, it’s another. It’s my mom.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “Tell me about your mother.”

HAMLET: “Can you believe she married my uncle? My dad hasn’t even settled in his grave and she does this. She should be mourning or something. So, get this—my mom is now my aunt and my uncle is now my stepfather and the king. I feel like I’m losing it.

PSYCHOLOGIST: “I see.”

HAMLET: “See what?”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “That your time is up.”

HAMLET: “But there’s more.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “Exactly.”
Hamlet Needs Therapy

“Hamlet and the Ghost”

It’s pretty obvious that Hamlet had a lot on his mind. Write a modern-day dialogue that might take place between Hamlet and a psychiatrist after he speaks to his father’s ghost. Remember, the sky’s the limit. The therapy session can be funny or serious. It’s your call. Warning: Be prepared to read the dialogue in class.

HAMLET: “Doc, you’ve gotta help me!”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “I’m listening.”

HAMLET: “Last night I spoke to my father.”

PSYCHOLOGY: “Your father? Your stepfather, Claudius?”

HAMLET: “No, my dead father.”

PSYCHOLOGY: “Oh, I see. Old King Hamlet.”

HAMLET: “Okay, this is what happened. The sentries in the castle told me and my good friend, Horatio, about this ghost, right. And so, I decided to check it out. Guess what? The ghost turns out to be my dad. Yeah, that’s awesome, huh? Anyway, my dad…”

PSYCHOLOGIST: (interrupting) “The ghost…”

HAMLET: “The ghost, my dad, same thing…tells me that my uncle Claudius, who is his brother, killed him by pouring poison into his ear.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “So, the ghost tells you that he is your father and that your uncle, who is also your new stepfather, and is also the new king killed your father, which is his brother?”

HAMLET: “Yeah. And that’s not all.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “Please continue.”

HAMLET: “My dad, the ghost, tells me that he wants me to avenge his death.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “And what did you say?”

HAMLET: “I said okay. That’s my dad. So, what do you think, doc?”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “I think you’re crazy.”
Hamlet Needs Therapy

“Hamlet and Claudius”

It's pretty obvious that Hamlet had a lot on his mind. Write a modern-day dialogue that might take place between Hamlet and a psychiatrist after Hamlet sees Claudius praying and decides not to kill him (III, iii). Remember, the sky's the limit. The therapy session can be funny or serious. It's your call. Warning: Be prepared to perform it in class.

HAMLET: “I couldn’t do it, doc.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “Do what, Hamlet?”

HAMLET: “Couldn’t avenge my father’s death.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “I see.”

HAMLET: “Here’s the deal. A group of actors came to the castle, right? And I used my charm to persuade them to perform a play for court that night...now get this, I inserted a few extra lines in the play. Pretty much my idea was to get the actors to re-enact my father’s murder. If Claudius freaked out, then obviously he killed my dad. Good idea, right?”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “I see.”

HAMLET: “Anyway, Claudius freaked out and rushed out of the room. I was on my way to tell my mom what happened when I saw Claudius alone. I think to myself, he’s alone and defenseless, I should do it now. But then I realize he’s praying.

PSYCHOLOGIST: “He’s praying.”

HAMLET: “Yeah. If I kill him while he’s praying, he’ll go to heaven.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “Hamlet, you’re crazy.”

HAMLET: “I am not. I want a second opinion.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “Fair enough...you’re insane.”
Hamlet Needs Therapy

“Hamlet kills Polonius”

It’s pretty obvious that Hamlet had a lot on his mind.
Write a modern-day dialogue that might take place between Hamlet and a psychiatrist after Hamlet mistakenly kills Polonius (III, iv). Remember, the sky’s the limit. The therapy session can be funny or serious. It’s your call. Warning: Be prepared to perform it in class.

HAMLET: “Doc, you’ve gotta help me. My mom thinks I’m crazy and it’s gotten to the point that I’m paranoid about everything.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “Paranoid?”

HAMLET: “Yeah. Paranoid. See, the other night I had the actors re-enact my father’s murder. Claudius freaked out which was a sign of his guilt. Okay, so I try to tell my mother about her new husband and I hear this sound behind the curtain in her room. I jabbed my sword through the curtain and Polonius fell dead. I actually thought he was my uncle Claudius, but he wasn’t. I kind of lost my temper and I yelled at my mom about her marriage to Claudius. But my pops appeared and told me to take his revenge on Claudius and not my mom.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “I see.”

HAMLET: “So, can you help me doctor?”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “Honestly?”

HAMLET: “You can, right?”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “No.”

HAMLET: “I think you help me out more than you know—all I need is someone to talk to and someone to listen.”

PSYCHOLOGIST: “What did you say?”
A. Who’s Who?
Match the characters in the left column to their descriptive traits in the right column. (3 points each)

_____ 1. Hamlet  
A) the Prince of Denmark

_____ 2. Gertrude  
B) councillor to the king; his right-hand man

_____ 3. Ophelia  
C) the Prince of Norway

_____ 4. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern  
D) Queen of Denmark

_____ 5. Fortinbras  
E) Hamlet’s friend

_____ 6. Polonius  
F) the newly crowned king of Denmark

_____ 7. Laertes  
G) daughter of Polonius and Hamlet’s girlfriend

_____ 8. Claudius  
H) the son of Polonius

_____ 9. Horatio  
I) school chums of Hamlet

B. That’s Not Right
Determine whether the sentences below are true or false. Write the answers in the blanks provided. (3 points each)

1. A lion roams the royal castle of Denmark. _________________________

2. *Hamlet* was written around 1600. _________________________

3. Ophelia drowns in a stream outside the castle. _________________________

4. Polonius believes Hamlet’s madness to be _________________________
   lovesickness.

5. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are executed. _________________________

C. A Complete Thought
Answer the questions. (2 points each)

1. What was the name of the play performed at the castle? _________________________

2. How did Claudius kill King Hamlet? _________________________

3. Why have Rosencrantz and Guildenstern been summoned to Denmark? _________________________

4. Who eulogizes over Hamlet’s corpse? _________________________
A. Who’s Who?
Match the characters in the left column to their descriptive traits in the right column. (3 points each)

| A | 1. Hamlet | A) the Prince of Denmark |
| D | 2. Gertrude | B) councillor to the king; his right-hand man |
| G | 3. Ophelia | C) the Prince of Norway |
| L | 4. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern | D) Queen of Denmark |
| C | 5. Fortinbras | E) Hamlet’s friend |
| B | 6. Polonius | F) the newly crowned king of Denmark |
| H | 7. Laertes | G) daughter of Polonius and Hamlet’s girl friend |
| F | 8. Claudius | H) the son of Polonius |
| E | 9. Horatio | I) school chums of Hamlet |

B. That’s Not Right
Determine whether the sentences below are true or false. Write the answers in the blanks provided. (3 points each)

1. A lion roams the royal castle of Denmark. False
2. *Hamlet* was written around 1600 True
3. Ophelia drowns in a stream outside the castle. True
4. Polonius believes Hamlet’s madness to be lovesickness. True
5. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are executed. True

C. A Complete Thought
Answer the questions. (2 points each)

1. What was the name of the play performed at the castle? *The Murder of Gonzago*
2. How did Claudius kill King Hamlet? *Claudius pours poison in his ear while he sleeps.*
3. Why have Rosencrantz and Guildenstern been summoned to Denmark? *To spy on Hamlet for Claudius.*
4. Who eulogizes over Hamlet’s corpse? *Horatio*