

**LESSON NOTES****School: Ba Sangam College****Year/Level: 13****Name: _____****Subject: English****Worksheet 17****Year: _____**

Strand	Reading and Viewing
Sub Strand	Communication Text Types – media, everyday communication, literary texts
Content Learning Outcome	Read and demonstrate understanding of a variety of complex texts.

LITERATURE**GENRE: DRAMA****TITLE: HAMLET****PLAYWRIGHT: WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE****ACT 3****SCENE 1**

Claudius and Gertrude interrogate Rosencrantz and Guildenstern about their discussion with Hamlet. The men have little to report except that the company of players who arrived shortly after they did seemed to have interested and pleased the prince, and that he has directed them to perform for the court this evening. Claudius sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to watch the prince and encourage him in this endeavor.

When they leave, Claudius sends Gertrude off so that he, Polonius, and Ophelia can plan the "chance" meeting between Ophelia and Hamlet. Through this staged meeting, Claudius and Polonius hope to test Polonius's thought that it is Hamlet's love for Ophelia that is so distracting him. They instruct Ophelia to stroll the hall, seemingly absorbed in a book, while they hide nearby to watch and listen.

Hamlet eventually appears, lost in his thoughts and apparently contemplating suicide. Catching sight of Ophelia, he interrupts his thoughts to speak with her. Ophelia tries to return some gifts he gave her, but, suspicious of her motives, he denies they are from him. He further denies that he loved her, which serves to bewilder and wound Ophelia. The two have an impassioned discussion, reeling in confusion and a mutual feeling of betrayal. Hamlet orders her to a nunnery and leaves.

Claudius and Polonius come to Ophelia's side, shocked by what they have witnessed. Polonius insists Hamlet's love for Ophelia—love that Polonius made her refuse—is at the root of the prince's madness. Claudius, already beginning to show a guilty conscience as an earlier aside suggests, is now convinced that Hamlet is brooding on something bigger—something that could be dangerous to his position. Although he initially refutes the idea that Hamlet is mad, he does say that madness should not go unchecked. He decides to send Hamlet to England, away from the stress of Denmark. Polonius agrees that sending him abroad is the best course, but also

suggests trying one last idea: sending the queen to speak with Hamlet after the play that evening, while he (Polonius) hides nearby to witness the conversation. Claudius consents.

SCENE 2

Hamlet coaches the actors in anticipation of the performance they are about to give for Claudius, Gertrude, and the rest of the court. As the players leave the prince to ready themselves, Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern enter, announcing that the king and queen will join them shortly. Hamlet sends the three of them off to hurry the players just as Horatio arrives.

Hamlet tells Horatio of his plan to use *The Mousetrap*—his version of *The Murder of Gonzago*—to catch the king off guard. He further reports that he has amended the presentation so that one scene re-creates what the ghost told him to be the circumstances of his father's murder. Most importantly, Hamlet instructs Horatio to watch the king's reaction.

As the play unfolds, Hamlet's additions to the original piece make for a strong, disturbing performance. It becomes too much for Claudius, who leaps to his feet and leaves. In the ensuing confusion, the play is halted, and all leave but Hamlet and Horatio, who recap what they've just seen.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern enter, telling Hamlet that the queen wishes to see him. They go around and around with Hamlet, trying to convince him to go to the queen. They are joined by Polonius, who speaks to Hamlet as if he is humoring a fool. They rouse Hamlet's anger, and he sends them off with word that he will join Gertrude soon. Left to his own thoughts, Hamlet's resolve to kill Claudius rises again, even as he plans to visit Gertrude.

Questions (5 Marks)

1. What do Polonius and Claudius hide behind the curtains? (1 mark)

2. Comment on Hamlet's soliloquy "To be or not to be....."? (2 marks)

3. Describe Claudius' reaction on the play? (1 mark)

4. Was Hamlet successful in his plan to find out the truth? (1 mark)