

**LESSON NOTES****School: Ba Sangam College****Year/Level: 13****Name: _____****Subject: English****Worksheet 19****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 4****SCENE 1**

King Claudius and Queen Gertrude, along with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, come together once again in Elsinore Castle. Gertrude dismisses Rosencrantz and Guildenstern so that she may tell Claudius of her meeting with Hamlet. Comparing the prince's madness with the wild power of the wind and the sea vying to see which is mightier, Gertrude tells Claudius of all that transpired between them, including how Hamlet killed Polonius.

Claudius says Hamlet must be sent away at once, and immediately summons Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He tells them Hamlet has slain Polonius, asks them to find Hamlet, and instructs them to bring Polonius's body to the chapel. Claudius and Gertrude leave to inform their closest supporters, hoping they can control the fallout.

SCENE 2

In a passageway somewhere in Elsinore castle, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern find Hamlet. They insist he tell them where Polonius's body is so they can take it to the chapel, but he at once runs verbal circles around them and taunts them. When he won't tell them where the body is, they demand he go with them to the king. He agrees to go with them, and then sprints away, as if in a game of hide-and-seek.

SCENE 3

Claudius, by himself, talks of his intent to send Hamlet to England—a plan made all the more reasonable because Hamlet has killed Polonius. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern come to the king with Hamlet in tow. When Claudius asks the whereabouts of Polonius's body, he too is answered in riddles until at last, as if tired of the game, Hamlet tells them where to find the corpse.

Claudius then tells Hamlet they must send him away—for his safety—to England. Hamlet consents, and as he exits, Claudius instructs Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to follow, saying they must set sail tonight.

Once alone, Claudius reveals the papers he has sent with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern ordering Hamlet's death.

SCENE 4

In this scene, set somewhere near Elsinore Castle, Hamlet, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern are headed for the ship that will carry them to England. They pass Fortinbras and his army, which is passing Elsinore en route to Poland. Hamlet stops to speak with the captain whom Fortinbras has sent to greet King Claudius and thank him for permission to pass through Denmark.

When the captain presses on, Hamlet stops a moment, alone, and compares himself to young Fortinbras. He rebukes himself for his failure to seek revenge for his murdered father when Fortinbras, another young prince who also lost his father, goes to war for honor over a worthless piece of land. At the close of this soliloquy, he again pledges himself to the act the ghost has assigned him.

SCENE 5

Back at Elsinore Castle, Ophelia has requested an audience with Gertrude. Having heard that Ophelia has been acting strangely since her father's death, the queen does not want to speak with her. But Horatio and other advisers suggest it might be better to speak with her than to let her wild talk and accusations fall on fertile ears. Gertrude submits.

Ophelia enters and is obviously in a disturbed state, singing and talking in a disconnected way. Claudius joins them and both king and queen are shocked by Ophelia's behavior.

When Ophelia leaves, Claudius informs Gertrude that Laertes has secretly returned from France after hearing of his father's death. As they speak, there is noise beyond their door, and a messenger enters to warn king and queen that Laertes, leading a riotous group of people, has come to see them.

Laertes enters; though angry, he convinces his followers to wait outside. He confronts Claudius and Gertrude, demanding answers and his father's body. As the king and queen try to calm him, Ophelia returns, still singing, offering flowers, and wandering in her distraction. Laertes's anger is nearly overwhelmed by his grief at the sight of his sister. Claudius seizes Laertes's moment of weakness and, with comforting words and gestures, convinces Laertes to come with him so that he may explain the circumstances of Polonius's death. Claudius promises Laertes that he will give his crown and kingdom if they find him—or Gertrude—at fault, but otherwise they will stand beside Laertes and help him through this tragedy.

SCENE 6

Horatio is approached by sailors bearing letters from Hamlet. One of the letters is for him; the others are for the king. In the letter to Horatio, Hamlet explains that en route to England their ship was overtaken by pirates, and he alone was taken prisoner. He explains the pirates are "thieves of mercy," and he is to do something for them. He asks that Horatio help the sailors get the other letters to the king and then have the sailors deliver Horatio to Hamlet. Having read his letter, Horatio departs with the sailors to find Hamlet.

SCENE 7

Claudius and Laertes are together in Elsinore. As promised, Claudius explains the circumstances of Polonius's death to Laertes, as well as his reasoning for sending Hamlet abroad. Just as they touch on the subject of Laertes's revenge for his father and sister, a messenger enters with letters for the king from Hamlet.

Hamlet informs Claudius that he is back in Denmark and wishes to meet with him the next day. Hamlet writes that he will explain everything when they meet. Knowing that Hamlet has returned, Claudius and Laertes devise a plan for a fencing match where Laertes will use a poisoned foil. As a backup plan, Claudius will also have a poisoned drink waiting for him.

Just as the plan is settled, the queen enters with news that Ophelia has drowned.

QUESTIONS 15 MARKS

1. In *Hamlet*, Act 4, Scene 2, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern search for Hamlet and for Polonius's body. How and why has the relationship between Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern deteriorated? (1 mark)

2. Act 4, Scene 3 of *Hamlet* opens with the king talking to himself. How does this soliloquy feel different from others? (2 marks)

3. Hamlet sees Fortinbras's army marching toward Poland in *Hamlet*, Act 4, Scene 4, and comments on the contrast between Fortinbras and himself. Consider this against the thought-versus-action theme. (2 marks)

4. In Act 4, Scene 4 of *Hamlet*, the audience sees Fortinbras again. What has changed for the young Norwegian? How do his changes stack up against Hamlet's? (2 marks)

5. Following Polonius's death, Laertes returns in Act 4, Scene 5 of *Hamlet* and discovers Ophelia's emotional collapse. What does this suggest for Laertes regarding the thought-versus-action theme? (2 marks)

6. In *Hamlet*, Act 4, Scene 6, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern will not return, and Hamlet is now showing quite straightforward behavior. How is that behavior shown in Hamlet's letter to Horatio? (2 marks)

7. In Act 4, Scene 7 of *Hamlet*, Gertrude informs Claudius and Laertes of Ophelia's death. Laertes is overwhelmed by emotion and leaves. What does Claudius's response reveal about him? (2 marks)

8. In Act 4, Scene 7 of *Hamlet*, Gertrude describes Ophelia's demise. What details does she provide that contradict the discussion of Ophelia's death in the following churchyard scene? (2 marks)
