



To be or not to be... that is the **Webquest**

The Archaeologist's Worksheet

Please remember that these questions are just guidelines. You may use them as starting points or suggestions, but feel free to explore the resources in the directions you like. They might work as a thread not to get lost in the labyrinths of the Web...

1. Did a historical prince Hamlet ever exist?
2. Which are the historical events which inspired Shakespeare's story?
3. Who had told the story of Hamlet before Shakespeare did?
4. Does Elsinore really exist? Where is it? Can you locate it?
5. What is a revenge tragedy?
6. What is The Spanish Tragedy? Who wrote it?
7. What are the elements (characters, plot, "special effects"...) of the revenge tragedy present in Hamlet?
8. What does the phrase "within this Wooden O" refer to? Does any sample of "a Wooden O" still exist?
9. Think about the problem of royal succession. Do you think it was a "hot issue" at the time of the first representation of the play in England?
10. When was the first representation staged? Who was the first actor to play as Hamlet?



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The Philosopher's Worksheet

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1. Make a list of the main themes of the play.
2. Reflect on the terms revenge and vendetta. Do they always mean the same thing? Do they both apply to the story of Hamlet?
3. Can you explain the expression "teen Angst"? How does it relate to Hamlet's story?
4. Action vs. contemplation
5. Madness in Hamlet and Ophelia
6. Love and death
7. Supernatural
8. Why doesn't Hamlet kill his uncle immediately after talking to the ghost or when he has the chance to do it after the "Mousetrap"?
9. Betrayal
10. Friendship vs. false friendship



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1. Find an adjective or a noun which can describe each of the main characters.
2. Build the family tree of the two main families living at the court of Elsinore: Hamlet's and Polonius'.
3. The hero: Hamlet – is he all good?
4. The villain: Claudius – is he all bad?
5. Gertrude: guilty or innocent? What about her relationship with her son?
6. Laertes: can he be considered another Hamlet?
7. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: who are they?
8. Yorick and the gravedigger: what's the meaning of their scene?
9. Hamlet is present even when he's not on the stage. Do you agree?
10. Psychological realism or stereotypes?
11. Who acts as a detective? How? If he is Sherlock who is his "Watson"?
12. Spying, secrecy and paranoia at the court of Elsinore



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The Stage Manager's Worksheet

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1. Think about three absolutely necessary costumes or props you would need to stage the play. Explain why.
2. What's Hamlet typical aspect? Why?
3. How old would you represent him? Why?
4. How would you stage the soliloquy? What's it all about, in the end? What are Hamlet's soliloquies about?
5. What do you think about the setting of the soliloquy in Ethan Hawke's version (2000)? Can you list some symbolic elements you can find in the scene?
6. Why are Shakespeare's plays staged in different historical ages which are usually closer to our time?
7. The play-within-the-play : what is it? What's its purpose? Does it achieve it?
8. What's "The Mousetrap"? Is it only another name for The Murder of Gonzago? Who created it?
9. Think about parodies: do you think they're just about spoofs and mockeries of the original or do you reckon they have a deeper function and value?