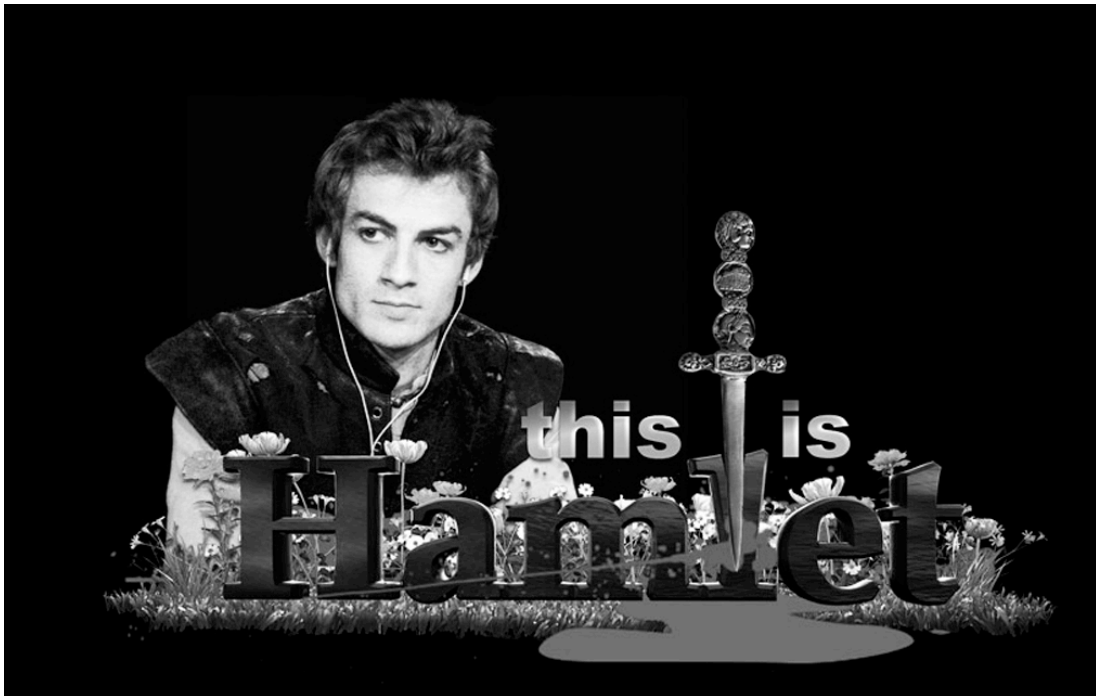


*This is Hamlet* in the Classroom:  
Lesson Plans and Resources  
for Teachers





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*This booklet does not contain the worksheets which accompany the below activities and exercises. To get the full version of this teaching booklet, or the worksheets as a separate PDF, go to <http://thisishamlet.com/teacher-materials/>, where you can download them for free.*

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## USING *THIS IS HAMLET* IN THE CLASSROOM

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We know it's tough to teach Shakespeare... we want to help!

*This is Hamlet* can be watched in its entirety as an entertaining commentary and analysis of Shakespeare's tragedy; it can also be used in sections as a teaching tool in your classroom. The full-length film presents a TV-style interview show with Hamlet himself, as well as other characters from the play. An actual production of Hamlet takes place at the same time as the interview show, and the characters go back and forth between three spaces: the on-stage production of the play, where you'll see full scenes from Shakespeare's play, the off-stage "wings" of the theater, where characters are interviewed by the "on-the-scene" reporter, Sarah Siddons, as they enter and exit the stage; and finally, the TV studio, where characters discuss their experiences and motivations with the fictional interview host, Ralph Holinshed.

Each full scene from the play is followed up by a conversation in the TV studio, where Hamlet and others discuss what just took place in the scene, both in terms of plot and thematics. The discussion offers initial insights into the characters of the play, and reveals some of the implications of the events as they transpire. We have taken care to leave *Hamlet* open to interpretation in this video, giving students the opportunity to think critically about the play's themes and ideas and come to their own conclusions. The film provides an ideal framework from which to launch your own classroom discussions with your students, and offers many possibilities for exercises and activities for your students to do together, in or outside the classroom.

This guide provides tips for introducing Shakespeare to your students, a *This is Hamlet* act-by-act lesson plan, and a list of additional web and text resources.

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## INTRODUCING STUDENTS TO SHAKESPEARE: GENERAL TIPS

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When introducing students to Shakespeare, the following pre-reading aids, games, and exercises can be helpful. Worksheets for these activities can be found in the accompanying worksheet booklet, which you can download as a PDF for free at <http://thisishamlet.com/teacher-materials/>.

### **Poll the class to determine familiarity with Shakespeare and *Hamlet***

- What do you know about Shakespeare? When did he live and what was his world like? What are some of the plays you have read or heard of?
- Have you seen any of Shakespeare's plays performed? Have you seen any film versions or adaptations of Shakespeare's plays (i.e. Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*, *Ten Things I Hate About You*, etc.)? Have you ever performed anything written by Shakespeare?
- What do you know about Shakespeare's language? Are iambic pentameter, prose, and verse familiar or unfamiliar terms? Do you know any famous quotes from Shakespeare? If so, what do you think they mean?
- What do you know about *Hamlet*? Any famous lines? Plot points? Characters? Where is it set, and when? What are some themes of *Hamlet*?
- What are your anxieties about Shakespeare? Is there anything that has confused you in past attempts to study Shakespeare? Is there anything that you're dreading as you embark on *Hamlet*?

### **Pre-read the *Dramatis Personae* to create Character Bookmarks**

Distribute index cards to students, along with the play or copies of the Cast List. Analyze and discuss the cast list with an eye towards relationships and social status. Have students depict the characters on their bookmarks based on what they've inferred from the *Dramatis Personae*. Students might group characters by family, by status, by nationality, etc, and might use lists, drawings, or other creative means to represent the cast of *Hamlet*.

### **Playing around with the text: a Sneaky Shakespeare exercise**

Distribute the first 11 lines of dialogue in *Hamlet* to students. Work through the text as a class to unlock any unfamiliar phrases. Divide the class in half, into a "Team Bernardo" and "Team Francisco." Have students select from a pile of index cards listing "secret styles," such as horror, western, detective, opera, soap opera, sit-com, musical, farce, and so on. Have the class exchange dialogue in this style, either as a group or student-by-student down the line. Encourage students to go big—this is Shakespeare! At the end of the exercise, re-group and have students guess Shakespeare's intended setting and style for the scene. Perform the scene in this style.

### **Pre-Detecting: Interpreting key lines out-of-context**

Distribute a worksheet of 5-8 key lines from Act 1 of *Hamlet*. Read each line aloud. Who do you imagine is speaking the line—a man or woman, someone old or young, powerful or weak, good or evil? Human or supernatural? To whom (or what) is he or she speaking? Have students write their ideas under each quote.

### **Weird Word Log**

Select ten archaic or unusual words from your students' first reading assignment and display on a transparency. Have students guess meaning, first by the word alone, then by interpreting it in context. Have students create a "Weird Word Log" to keep track of unusual words. For each word, students may wish to write a definition or synonym and write and illustrate a sentence of their own that employs the word.

## ***This is Hamlet* Teaching Guide**

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*This is Hamlet* is designed for maximum usefulness in the classroom. The film can be viewed act-by-act, by chapter selection, or in its entirety, and is valuable both as an introduction to *Hamlet* and as a resource for students as they work through the text. Content from the film is also available online, allowing students to complete viewing assignments outside of class or to refer back to specific scenes.

Below you'll find a series of general exercises and activities that address the play in its entirety; this is followed by more specific classroom activities that address each act of *Hamlet* sequentially.

Worksheets for these activities can be found in the accompanying worksheet booklet, which you can download as a PDF for free at <http://thisishamlet.com/teacher-materials/>.

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### **GENERAL EXERCISES**

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The following are general exercises that may enhance your students' experience. Adapt these exercises as needed depending on the structure of your curriculum and your use of *This is Hamlet*.

#### ***How might you stage a specific moment in Hamlet for theater? How about for film?***

Ask students to generate ideas for staging sections of text you are reading. Possible moments that are also shown in *This is Hamlet* include:

- Hamlet's encountering of the ghost (I,v)*
- The Mousetrap performance (III,ii)*
- Ophelia's madness scenes (IV,v)*
- Gertrude's "Willow" speech (IV,vi)*
- The graveyard scene (V,i)*
- The duel between Hamlet and Laertes (V,ii)*
- The soliloquies (I,ii; II,ii; III,i; III,iii; IV,iv)*

After viewing, compare students' ideas and the staging in *This is Hamlet*. Do certain staging ideas suggest different emphases? Different points of view? Different moods or atmospheres? What is conveyed by the staging ideas you have generated and by the film representation you have seen? Do you feel that some scenes can be dramatized more effectively through one medium or the other? You may also consider dramatizing moments that occur off-stage, such as the pirate attack, King Hamlet's funeral, the Royal Wedding, and action that occurs after the play's conclusion.

This exercise can be easily expanded into a filmmaking or performance exercise using the same section of text.

## *This is Hamlet in the Classroom*

### ***How do actors convey meaning and tone?***

The following activity is adapted from *Reading Shakespeare with Young Adults* by Mary Ellen Dakin.

Distribute copies of a speech from the play to students (suggestions: Gertrude's Willow speech (IV,vi); any of Hamlet's soliloquies (I,ii; II,ii; III,i; III,iii; IV,iv); Claudius' "O my offense is rank" speech (III,iii); Ophelia's mad speech (IV,v)).

1. *Highlight words and phrases that appeal to any of the five senses—sight, sound, smell, taste, or touch.*
2. *Underline and label examples of personification. Explain what things are being humanized (if applicable).*
3. *How does this passage sound when you say it out loud? Do you hear a rhythm? Are the words soft and musical or harsh and discordant?*
4. *What is the mood of this speech? How do the imagery and the personification contribute to the mood?*

After a discussion, key up the appropriate scene in *This is Hamlet*, and distribute the following questions to consider while watching.

5. *Listen closely. Explain how the actor uses his or her voice as a performance tool.*
6. *Watch closely. What else does the actor do to add meaning and emotion to these words? For example, how does she or he use gestures, facial expressions, and movement to enrich the words?*
7. *How do the camera shots and angles contribute to the drama of this scene?*

Conclude the exercise with small-group or whole class discussions.

### ***You be the Host!***

Have students script a dialogue between Ralph and one or more of the characters. Bring characters into the studio to question them on their motivations and feelings in a particular scene.

### ***Musically Speaking***

Students can write and perform their own song summaries of scenes or acts, perform the summaries from the DVD, or use the song summaries as inspiration for other musical explorations of *Hamlet*.

### ***At-Home Viewing Assignments***

The Appendix on p. 14 lists content from the movie that is available online, allowing you greater flexibility in giving viewing assignments or structuring activities around content that students can access anytime.

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## ***ACT I***

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### **DVD Chapters Devoted to Act I**

1. Introduction with Ralph Holinshed and Sarah Siddons (5:05)
2. I,ii: The Royal Family (5:59)
3. I,ii: Soliloquy: "Too too solid flesh" (5:28)
4. Commercial Break: University of Wittenberg (0:44)
5. I,iii: Laertes departs (intro) (1:05)
6. I,iii: Laertes departs (5:28)
7. I,v: Hamlet and the Ghost (8:24)
8. ACT I SONG SUMMARY (1:06)

### **Discussion Questions (by DVD Chapter)**

As you watch *This is Hamlet*, you'll notice that there are often rhetorical questions displayed beneath Ralph and his guests in studio scene (this space is referred to as "the lower third" in TV news and talk show parlance). Some teachers like to use these questions as discussion prompts; accordingly, we've printed them below, and added a few more that might be useful:

From **DVD 2**, "The Royal Family" studio segment:

- Why doesn't Prince Hamlet inherit his father's throne?
- How long has it been since Hamlet's father's death?
- Does Hamlet resent the fact that he's not king?

From **DVD 3**, Hamlet's "Too Too Solid Flesh" Soliloquy:

- Is Hamlet suffering from depression?

From **DVD 6**, "Laertes Departs" studio segment:

- Hamlet and Ralph begin a discussion about Danish traditions, but it seems that Hamlet is really talking about something else. What do you think is going on here? Refer to the text: I,iv, 7-38.
- Is following the ghost reckless or logical?

### **Activities and Essay Questions**

#### **1. ADVICE: OPHELIA, LAERTES, POLONIUS (I, iii)**

Review Laertes' advice to Ophelia (DVD Chapter 6; I,iii 5-44) and Polonius' advice to Laertes (Chapter 6; I,iii 55-81). What is the advice being given? How good is it? Are there any contradictions in it? Sarah Siddons tells us that Ophelia is aware of her brother's failure to follow his own advice. Why does Laertes advise Ophelia when he doesn't live up to the principles he preaches? Consider the "family tradition" of advice-giving set by Polonius, and how this might influence Laertes. Consider Polonius' advice: is it fair to say "to thine own self be true," when he has just given Laertes advice that might contradict his son's nature?

**ACTIVITY: TURN THE TABLES (DVD 6):** Write Ophelia's advice to Laertes or Laertes' or Ophelia's advice to Polonius. How would Ophelia advise Laertes to be a better brother and role model? How would Polonius' children advise their father to behave towards them?

**ACTIVITY: ADVICE TO A NEWBIE (DVD 6):** Using Polonius' speech as a model, write advice to a new student at your school. How do you navigate the social scene? What foods should you avoid in the cafeteria? Example: "Neither a slacker nor an overachiever be..."

#### **2. HAMLET'S ENCOUNTER WITH THE GHOST (I,v)**

Review Hamlet's conversation with the ghost of his father, King Hamlet (DVD Chapter 7; *Hamlet* I,v 1-112). What does Hamlet learn from the ghost, and what is the impact of these revelations?

**ESSAY: COSTS OF MURDER (DVD 7):** King Hamlet tells his son that he shall be bound to avenge his murder when he hears of it. Does Prince Hamlet believe he has a moral obligation to kill Claudius? Consider King Hamlet's description of his own torments (hell, or purgatory?), and his desire that his wife Gertrude be left "to heaven." Consider Hamlet's references to hell and heaven in his own speech. By killing Claudius, does Hamlet believe he would doom himself to hell? "Self-slaughter is a mortal sin," Hamlet tells Ralph. For Hamlet, is revenge a mortal sin—or a moral necessity?

*This essay topic can be approached as an opinion paper or as a more rigorous research project.*

## ACT II

### DVD Chapters Devoted to Act II

9. II,ii: Introducing Ophelia (0:58)
10. II,ii: Ophelia in a Fright (6:12)
11. II,ii: Hamlet Meets Polonius (9:05)
12. II,ii: Soliloquy: "Rogue and peasant slave" (5:10)
13. ACT II SONG SUMMARY (0:58)

### Discussion Questions (by DVD Chapter)

From DVD 10, "Ophelia in a Fright" studio segment:

- Is Hamlet's visit to Ophelia lovesickness, cruelty, or strategy?

From DVD 11, "Hamlet meets Polonius" studio segment:

- How will it help Hamlet if everyone thinks he's crazy?
- Is Hamlet's existential crisis getting in the way of revenge?
- Have the players revived Hamlet's plan for revenge?

From DVD 12, "Rogue and Peasant Slave" Studio segment:

- Why can't Hamlet take action?
- Is Hamlet beginning to doubt the ghost—and can ghosts be trusted?

### Activities and Essay Questions

#### 1. HAMLET VISITS OPHELIA

Hamlet paid a silent visit to Ophelia which Ophelia struggled to decipher (DVD Chapter 10; *Hamlet* II,I 75-110). Since Hamlet won't spill his feelings to her or to Ralph, see if he'll reveal them to a therapist: put Hamlet on the couch!

**ACTIVITY: HAMLET IN THERAPY (DVD 10):** Today's session is looking at the way Hamlet is behaving towards Ophelia. The therapist might ask Hamlet to talk about his past relationships, his current feelings towards Ophelia, his dreams—be creative, and see what you can uncover about Hamlet's behavior in Ophelia's room. Was he trying to say something in code? What are his priorities right now, and where does Ophelia come into his plans? Write a 1-2 page script and perform in front of the class.

#### 2. OPHELIA'S SITUATION

Review the conversation between Ophelia and Sarah Siddons in which Ophelia concludes that "guys are just so hard to read" (DVD Chapter 10). Reflect on the pressure Ophelia has received from both her father and her brother. As a class, discuss Ophelia's status within the social hierarchy of the Danish court and within her family. What is her status compared to Hamlet's?

**ESSAY: OPHELIA'S DIARY (DVD 10):** After speaking with Sarah Siddons and feeding the ducks with her father, Ophelia returns to her bedroom to sort out her feelings for Hamlet. Free-write Ophelia's diary entry. She might be thinking about the love letters she received from Hamlet, about her feelings towards her father for making her return these letters, about her practical prospects for marriage with someone above her rank, about her brother's absence when he could provide advice...

### 3. HAMLET'S SOLILOQUIES

Review Hamlet's two monologues in Act II: "What a piece of work is man" (*Hamlet* II, ii) and "What a rogue and peasant slave am I" (DVD Chapter 12, *Hamlet* II, ii).

**ACTIVITY: STORYBOARD A SPEECH (DVD 11,12):** Students create a "storyboard" for a section of either the "What a piece of work is man" or the "Rogue and Peasant Slave" speech. Have students select lines to illustrate, then draw 10-20 successive images creating a short film sequence for these lines, paying particular attention to metaphors and imagery. For example, in the first monologue, students could draw a wide-shot of the "majestical roof" followed by a close-up of the "golden fire" followed by a shot of Hamlet looking at the scene and making no sense of it. The more specific images you can come up with, the better!

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## ACT III

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### DVD Chapters Devoted to Act III

14. III,i: Soliloquy: "To be or not to be" (4:11)
15. III,i: Hamlet and Ophelia (4:59)
16. Commercial Break: ImperialMatch.com (0:38)
17. III,i: Hamlet and Ophelia in studio (3:06)
18. III,ii: Hamlet prepares the Mousetrap (8:15)
19. III,iii: Claudius and his conscience (5:46)
20. Commercial Break: Pure-B-Sure (0:39)
21. III,iv: Intro: Gertrude in the bedroom (0:37)
22. III,iv: Gertrude in the bedroom (6:03)
23. ACT III SONG SUMMARY (1:00)

### Discussion Questions (by DVD Chapter)

From DVD 17, "Hamlet and Ophelia" studio segment:

- Are Hamlet and Ophelia a couple, or not?
- Who's been mistreated, Ophelia, Hamlet, or both?
- Why would Hamlet tell Ophelia to "get thee to a nunnery"?

From DVD 18, "Hamlet prepares the Mousetrap" studio segment:

- Why can't Hamlet play his role as prince and son?
- Is Hamlet's love of the theater another way to avoid decisions?
- Is Hamlet finally ready to take action?

From DVD 19, "Claudius and his conscience" scene:

- Can you be forgiven for your sins and still keep everything you gained by committing them?

### Activities and Essay Questions

(Activities 1 and 3 adapted from Mary Ellen Dakin's *Reading Shakespeare with Young Adults*)

#### 1. TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Review Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy (DVD 14, *Hamlet* III, i). This famous monologue more well-known than understood. Getting students to appreciate its complexity is not easy - this activity is meant to slow them down and identify each of Hamlet's thoughts.

## *This is Hamlet in the Classroom*

**ACTIVITY: EMULATING HAMLET (DVD 14):** Distribute triple-spaced copies of the soliloquy. Encourage students to replace every word or almost every word with a word that serves the same grammatical purpose. Is there a logic to Hamlet's musings? How does each thought follow the next? Students should describe an actual choice that they are facing or have faced. An emulation by student Colleen Myers, "To Snooze or Not To Snooze," is provided with the worksheet.

### 2. THE MOUSETRAP

Review Hamlet's plan to entrap Claudius by inserting extra lines into a play (this begins at the end of the "rogue and peasant slave" monologue in *Hamlet* II, ii), as well as the performance of the "Mousetrap" (DVD Chapter 18, *Hamlet* III,ii). How would you entrap Claudius, if the action were taking place today?

**ESSAY: MODERN MOUSETRAP (DVD 18):** Write a brief passage of lines to be inserted into something Claudius might watch. Be creative! How might you slip a "mousetrap" into Claudius' favorite soap opera or reality TV show? Into a Star Trek episode? Into a contemporary play that you enjoy? Select your own material, and write the inserted "mousetrap" content in this style, beginning and ending with the source material.

### 3. CLAUDIUS: "OH MY OFFENCE IS RANK"

Review Claudius' "Oh my offence is rank" speech (DVD Chapter 19, *Hamlet* III, iii). The monologue is a fascinating window into Claudius's thoughts, but it is also a compressed series of powerful reflections on remorse, forgiveness, and divine grace.

**ACTIVITY: CLAUDIUS REBUS (DVD 19):** In pencil, copy out each line of Claudius' speech on unlined paper. Select keywords from each line, preferably words that name ideas or emotions, and erase them. In their place, draw symbols for these words. Think of creative ways to symbolize the words. Imaging the words in this way can help emphasize the emotional content of the speech and may alert you to words that hold multiple meanings. Have dictionaries on hand to illuminate unfamiliar words.

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## *ACT IV*

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### **DVD Chapters Devoted to Act IV**

- 24. IV,i: Polonius' body (7:41)
- 25. IV,v: Ophelia's grief (6:33)
- 26. IV,vi: Good news from Horatio (2:16)
- 27. IV,vii: Bad news from Gertrude (3:00)
- 28. ACT IV SONG SUMMARY (0:58)

### **Discussion Questions (by DVD Chapter)**

From **DVD 24**, "Polonius' body" behind-the-scenes segment:

- Why is Hamlet so willing to leave Denmark now?
- Why is Hamlet having these thoughts about the nature of war now?

From **DVD 25**, "Ophelia's grief" studio segment:

- Does Gertrude know anything about Claudius' current plans?

## *This is Hamlet* in the Classroom

- Did Gertrude's involvement with Claudius start before King Hamlet's death?
- Did Gertrude know about or have anything to do with the murder itself?

From DVD 27, "Bad news from Gertrude":

- How did Gertrude know the details of Ophelia's death?
- Was Ophelia's death an accident, or suicide?

### **Activities and Essay Questions**

#### **1. OPHELIA'S GRIEF AND MADNESS**

Review the scenes when we see Ophelia grieving and descending into madness. Why does Ophelia express herself primarily in song, rather than directly speaking her feelings?

**ACTIVITY: MADNESS MONOLOGUE (DVD 25):** Review Ophelia's dialogue with Gertrude and Claudius (DVD Chapter 25, *Hamlet* IV, v). Cut and re-paste Ophelia's lines in a new order to form a "madness monologue" to be performed. The goal is to apply extreme performance choices to the text to discover the range of what the text can convey. Students should consider playing with a variety of different choices on each line, varying pitch, volume, accents, and rate of speech, and incorporating singing, physical actions, and other elements. Perform monologues outside or in a theater, if possible, to give students maximum freedom for exploration and expression.

#### **2. PIRATE ATTACK**

In *This is Hamlet* (DVD Chapter 26), we learn from Hamlet's text message to Horatio that Hamlet's ship was attacked by pirates. Of course, in the play, Horatio learns this from a letter received from some sailors, which he reads aloud on stage. Review the details of the pirate attack.

**ACTIVITY: PIRATE TABLEAUX (DVD 26):** Working in groups of 5 or 6, stage the pirate invasion through five or more "tableaux." Group members might play pirates, Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, other sailors, or can use their bodies to represent ships or other inanimate objects. Tell a story with the tableaux. What did Hamlet do in each moment of the pirate invasion? As the final tableau, depict Hamlet on the pirate ship returning to Denmark.

#### **3. GERTRUDE: INNOCENT OR GUILTY?**

Consider Gertrude's silence in her interview with Ralph after Claudius' departure (DVD Chapter 27). Review the discussion topics above and what Gertrude has said in previous scenes and come to your own conclusions about Gertrude's innocence or guilt in the crimes committed.

**ESSAY: GERTRUDE'S SECRETS (DVD 27):** Write Gertrude's inner monologue during her interview with Ralph. What would Gertrude be thinking after Claudius leaves and before Ralph speaks? What would be going through her head when she hears Ralph's first question? Feel free to expand the scene and add dialogue with Ralph if you would like to have Gertrude speak.

*Follow-up Essay:* Whatever role you gave Gertrude in your first monologue (an innocent or an accomplice), reverse it. Write her inner monologue as if she had behaved in the opposite way from what you first concluded. Can you find evidence to support this view as well? How does this change the way you feel about Gertrude?

## ACT V

### DVD Chapters Devoted to Act V

- 29. V,i: In the graveyard (9:06)
- 30. Commercial Break: Poison (0:46)
- 31. V,ii: The fencing match (10:21)
- 32. Credits/ ACT V SONG SUMMARY (3:22)

### Discussion Questions (by DVD Chapter)

From DVD 29, "In the graveyard" studio segment:

- Are Hamlet's musings on death about his father or himself?
- Why does death remind Hamlet of Ophelia?
- Why does Hamlet decide to have Rosencrantz and Guildenstern killed?
- What is Laertes' problem with Hamlet?

From DVD 31, "The fencing match" segment:

- Does Laertes feel conflicted about killing Hamlet?

### Activities and Essay Questions

#### 1. THE TRAGEDY OF HAMLET

When Ralph prepares to conclude "The Tragedy of Prince Hamlet," Hamlet replies, alarmed, "Tragedy?!" Why is *Hamlet* a tragedy? Does it need to end this way? Could the play be resolved differently? How would a different conclusion change the meaning of the play?

**DISCUSSION: HAMLET REDUX:** What events would need to be changed to have made the play resolve happily for Hamlet? For Rosencrantz and Guildenstern? For Ophelia? For Polonius? For others? Trace linked events. Can you spot any "chain reactions" in the play, events that caused a series of other events to take place?

**ESSAY: HAMLET'S STRATEGIES:** In *This is Hamlet*, we frequently see Hamlet working on his strategy in his notebook. Create two one-page documents: the first, a depiction of what actually unfolds in the script (from Hamlet's encounter with the ghost through the end of the play); the second, an alternate strategy for Hamlet that might have changed the play's course. For example, in Hamlet's alternate strategy, he might have planned a dinner date with Ophelia when he could comfort her and gain her help in brainstorming ideas. Feel free to use drawings, diagrams, or other creative tools to represent these strategies.

#### 2. HAMLET IN A HURRY: SUMMARIZING THE TEXT

Trying to summarize a long and complex play is a difficult task. Summarizing is not only a good review exercise, but it also forces students to prioritize what is most important: how is plot related to the meaning of the play?

**ACTIVITY: "TTYL SEND":** Divide the class into five groups and assign one act to each group. Have students work together to compose 10-15 text messages sent from character to character that effectively trace the narrative arc of the complete act. Ex: Hamlet to Horatio: "What up, Hor? C u @ battlements 2nt; i'll believe this ghost thing when i c it u crzy cat. Ttyl." What gets left out of the text message summaries?

**3. REVIEWING YOUR EXPERIENCE OF *HAMLET* AND *THIS IS HAMLET***

**ESSAY: REFLECTION:** Reflect on your experience over the last unit. Write a 1-2 page reaction paper. You may wish to respond to one or more questions from the following list: What moments in *Hamlet* resonated most strongly for you? How did watching *This is Hamlet* affect your experience of studying *Hamlet*? Did the video make clear anything that you had missed in reading the text, or provide you with additional insight into characters' thoughts and motivations? Were there moments when you wish Ralph had asked characters additional "tough questions"—and if so, what questions, to whom, and at what point? How did the actors' performances match or fail to match what you imagined of the roles when you read the text? If you were creating *This is Hamlet 2.0*, what would you keep, and what would you change?

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**ADDITIONAL WEB AND TEXT RESOURCES  
FOR STUDYING, TEACHING, AND PERFORMING SHAKESPEARE**

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Barton, John. *Playing Shakespeare: An Actor's Guide*. New York: Anchor Books, 1984.

Bryson, Bill. *Shakespeare: The World as Stage*. New York: HarperCollins, 2007.

Dakin, Mary Ellen. *Reading Shakespeare with Young Adults*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2009.

Haddon, John. *Teaching Reading Shakespeare*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

HamletWorks. Ed. Bernice Kliman, Frank Clary, Hardin Aasand, et al. Line-by-line annotation of the text, compiled from numerous sources.

<<http://www.leoyan.com/global-language.com/ENFOLDED>>.

Rocklin, Edward L. *Performance Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2005.

Rodenburg, Patsy. *Speaking Shakespeare*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002.

Shakespeare Help: Hamlet. 2009. Links to YouTube Performances, Articles, and Images.

<<http://www.shakespearehelp.com/hamlet.htm>>.

Shakespeare, William. *Complete Works*. Ed. Jonathan Bate and Eric Rasmussen. Royal Shakespeare Company Commission. Hampshire, England: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 2008.

Web English Teacher: Hamlet. Lesson Plans and Teaching Ideas.

<<http://www.webenglishteacher.com/hamlet.html>>.

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**ABOUT REINVENTING THE WHEEL PRODUCTION COMPANY**

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We set out to create an entertaining introduction to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, something that would make the world of *Hamlet* more approachable and instill a desire to continue to explore it.

**Jeremy Sabol** is a Lecturer in Stanford University's Program in Structured Liberal Education; he also teaches philosophy and literature in Stanford's Continuing Studies Program. He holds a PhD in French Literature from Yale University. Jeremy co-wrote and co-produced *This is Hamlet* with Greg. Jeremy also plays Ralph Holinshed, the television show host, in *This is Hamlet* as well as *This is Macbeth*.

**Greg Watkins** is a Lecturer in Stanford University's Program in Structured Liberal Education. He holds a joint PhD in Religious Studies and Humanities from Stanford University and an MFA in Film Production from UCLA. Greg recently published *Teaching Religion and Film* (2008). Greg directed *This is Hamlet*, and co-wrote and co-produced the film with Jeremy.

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## APPENDIX A. VIDEO CONTENT AVAILABLE ONLINE

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The following chapters from the DVD are available online on the "Reinventing the Wheel" YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/thisishakespeare>.

Viewing assignments can be helpful as students work on performance activities or essays.

### **Song Summaries**

- DVD 8. ACT I SONG SUMMARY (1:06)
- DVD 13. ACT II SONG SUMMARY (0:58)
- DVD 23. ACT III SONG SUMMARY (1:00)
- DVD 28. ACT IV SONG SUMMARY (0:58)

### **Scenes**

- DVD 2. I,ii: The Royal Family (5:59)
- DVD 3. I,ii: Soliloquy: "Too Too Solid Flesh" (5:28)
- DVD 6. I,iii: Laertes departs (5:28)
- DVD 7. I,v: Hamlet and the Ghost (8:24)
- DVD 10. II,ii: Ophelia in a Fright (6:12)
- DVD 11. II,ii: Hamlet Meets Polonius (9:05)
- DVD 11: Sarah Siddons Interviews Rosencrantz and Guildenstern
- DVD 12. II,ii: Soliloquy: "Rogue and peasant slave" (5:10)
- DVD 15. III,i: Hamlet and Ophelia (4:59)
- DVD 19. III,iii: Claudius and his conscience (5:46)
- DVD 21. III,iv: Intro: Gertrude in the bedroom (037)
- DVD 27. IV,vii: Bad news from Gertrude (3:00)

### **Commercials**

- DVD 4. Commercial Break: University of Wittenberg (0:44)
- DVD 16. Commercial Break: ImperialMatch.com (0:38)
- DVD 20. Commercial Break: Pure-B-Sure (0:39)
- DVD 30. Commercial Break: Poison (0:46)

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## APPENDIX B. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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### Discussion Questions (by DVD Chapter)

From DVD 2, I,ii "The Royal Family" studio segment:

- Why doesn't Prince Hamlet inherit his father's throne?
- How long has it been since Hamlet's father's death?
- Does Hamlet resent the fact that he's not king?

From DVD 3, I,iii Hamlet's "Too Too Solid Flesh" Soliloquy:

- Is Hamlet suffering from depression?

From DVD 6, I,v "Laertes departs" studio segment:

- Hamlet and Ralph begin a discussion about Danish traditions, but it seems that Hamlet is really talking about something else. What do you think is going on here? Refer to the text: I,iv, 7-38.
- Is following the ghost reckless or logical?

From DVD 10, II,i "Ophelia in a Fright" studio segment:

- Is Hamlet's visit to Ophelia lovesickness, cruelty, or strategy?

From DVD 11, II, ii "Hamlet meets Polonius" studio segment:

- How will it help Hamlet if everyone thinks he's crazy?
- Is Hamlet's existential crisis getting in the way of revenge?
- Have the players revived Hamlet's plan for revenge?

From DVD 12, II,ii "Rogue and Peasant Slave" Studio segment:

- Why can't Hamlet take action?
- Is Hamlet beginning to doubt the ghost—and can ghosts be trusted?

From DVD 17, III,i "Hamlet and Ophelia" studio segment:

- Are Hamlet and Ophelia a couple, or not?
- Who's been mistreated, Ophelia, Hamlet, or both?
- Why would Hamlet tell Ophelia to "get thee to a nunnery"?

From DVD 18, III,ii "Hamlet prepares the Mousetrap" studio segment:

- Why can't Hamlet play his role as prince and son?
- Is Hamlet's love of the theater another way to avoid decisions?
- Is Hamlet finally ready to take action?

From DVD 19, III,iii "Claudius and his conscience" scene:

- Can you be forgiven for your sins and still keep everything you gained by committing them?

From DVD 24, IV,i "Polonius' body" behind-the-scenes segment:

- Why is Hamlet so willing to leave Denmark now?
- Why is Hamlet having these thoughts about the nature of war now?

From DVD 25, IV,v "Ophelia's grief" studio segment:

- Does Gertrude know anything about Claudius' current plans?
- Did Gertrude's involvement with Claudius start before King Hamlet's death?
- Did Gertrude know about or have anything to do with the murder itself?

From DVD 27, IV,vii "Bad news from Gertrude":

- How did Gertrude know the details of Ophelia's death?
- Was Ophelia's death an accident, or suicide?

From DVD 29, V,i "In the graveyard" studio segment:

- Are Hamlet's musings on death about his father or himself?
- Why does death remind Hamlet of Ophelia?
- Why does Hamlet decide to have Rosencrantz and Guildenstern killed?
- What is Laertes' problem with Hamlet?

From DVD 31, V,ii "The fencing match" segment:

- Does Laertes feel conflicted about killing Hamlet?