

Key term	Definition
Soliloquy	When a character speaks their thoughts aloud on stage without the presence of other characters.
Misanthropic	The general hatred, dislike, or distrust of the human species, human behavior, or human nature.
Machiavellian	Cunning, scheming, and unscrupulous.
Prose	The ordinary, natural way that speech is written.
Verse	Poetic speech written in a regular rhythm - point of action/tension.
Anagnorisis	The protagonist recognizes his or her or some other character's true identity.
Peripeteia	A reversal of circumstances, or turning point.
Existentialism	The exploration of the nature of existence with emphasis on the experiences of humanity.
Fatalism	The belief that people cannot change the way events will happen and that events, especially bad ones, cannot be avoided.

Characters in Macbeth	
Hamlet Misanthropic Melancholic Nihilistic	Claudius Machiavellian Duplicitous Unctuous
Ophelia Submissive Subservient Bereft	Gertrude Complacent Apathetic Obtuse

Plot summary				
ACT 1 In Act 1 of <i>Hamlet</i>, the ghost of the recently deceased King Hamlet appears, revealing to his son, Prince Hamlet, that he was murdered by his brother, Claudius, who then quickly married Gertrude, Hamlet's mother and now Queen. The ghost demands Hamlet avenge his "foul and most unnatural murder." Hamlet vows to fulfill his father's command, hinting he will feign madness as part of his revenge plot.	ACT 2 Polonius sends a spy to observe Laertes in France. Ophelia reports Hamlet's bizarre behaviour, leading Polonius to conclude Hamlet's madness stems from rejected love. King Claudius and Queen Gertrude, concerned by Hamlet's transformation, summon his friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to discover its cause. A troupe of actors arrives, inspiring Hamlet to plan a play, hoping to expose Claudius's guilt.	ACT 3 Claudius and Polonius spy on Hamlet's intense confrontation with Ophelia, where he harshly rejects her. Hamlet stages "The Mousetrap," a play mirroring his father's murder, which causes Claudius to storm out, confirming his guilt. Hamlet then finds Claudius praying but delays killing him, fearing he'd go to heaven. In Gertrude's chamber, Hamlet accidentally kills Polonius, who was hiding, believing him to be Claudius.	ACT 4 In Act 4, Claudius sends Hamlet to England with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, plotting his execution. Ophelia, driven mad by her father Polonius's death, drowns. Laertes, enraged by his father's murder and sister's madness, returns and plots with Claudius to kill Hamlet. They plan a poisoned duel, and a poisoned drink as backup, upon Hamlet's unexpected return to Denmark after his ship was attacked by pirates.	ACT 5 Hamlet and Horatio encounter gravediggers, and Hamlet contemplates mortality holding Yorick's skull. Ophelia's funeral procession arrives, revealing her death, and Hamlet and Laertes fight over their grief. A duel is arranged where Gertrude accidentally drinks poisoned wine and dies. Laertes wounds Hamlet with a poisoned blade, but they exchange swords, and Hamlet wounds Laertes. Laertes confesses Claudius's plot, and Hamlet kills Claudius before dying himself. Fortinbras arrives and claims the Danish throne.

Key Quotations	
"To be, or not to be: that is the question." (Act 3, Scene 1)	"Something is rotten in the state of Denmark." (Act 1, Scene 4)
"Though this be madness, yet there is method in't." Act 2, Scene 2)	"The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King." (Act 2, Scene 2)
"The time is out of joint. O cursed spite, / That ever I was born to set it right!" (Act 1, Scene 5)	"O, that this too too solid flesh would melt" (Act 1, Scene 2)

Model paragraph for Question 2

(ii) How far would you agree that in *Hamlet* 'an **obsession** with **honour** is the **driving force** of the play'? (45 marks)

Intro: In *Hamlet*, **obsession with honour** is irrefutably the **driving force** of the play, especially for male characters who feel an obligation to revenge in **honour** of their father. However, Shakespeare arguably presents the obsession with honour as being less definitive for Hamlet, and in this sense perhaps Hamlet's morals rather than his **honour** are the **driving force** behind his behaviour, and in turn that of the play.

Main paragraph: Shakespeare intentionally presents **obsession with honour** through the character of Laertes, who 'dare(s) damnation' and will be 'revenged most thoroughly for my father'. Through such exclamatives, Shakespeare presents the **obsession with honour** as being due to the Ancient Roman code, which Laertes is embodying, which prizes family honour above everything else. Indeed, this is conveyed through the energy in which Laertes says he will be 'most thoroughly for my father'. The superlative 'most' thus emphasises the extremity of his feelings towards **honour**, almost as if it were an **obsession**. This is emphasised through the way that he 'dares damnation' which creates the impression of him being careless and being so consumed by chivalric duty that he risks eternal damnation. Indeed, revenge was against the law in Elizabethan England and therefore Shakespeare, through Laertes, is presenting **honour** as perhaps being above the law. However, as Foulkes argues, the play perhaps isn't about **honour** but in fact whether violence is acceptable in a world caught between Ancient Roman code and Christian morals. Ultimately, although Shakespeare may be presenting **honour** as the **driving force** of the play, he is simultaneously criticising this by presenting its damaging consequences.

Exam information

Question 1 (15 marks)

Analyse an extract from the play (do not need discuss wider play)

Spend approx: 20 minutes on this section

Aim for approx: 1 sentence intro and 2-3 pghs in the main body of the essay

Lots of quotes - 3-6 per paragraph.

AO1, AO2

Question 2 (45 marks)

Essay question on the whole play

Spend approx: 40 minutes on this section (10 mins planning)

Aim for approx: 2 sentence intro that engages with every important part of the question and four paragraphs in the main body of the essay.

AO1, AO2, AO3, AO5

Paragraph annotations

Band	AO1 Articulate informed, personal and creative responses to literary texts, using associated concepts and terminology, and coherent, accurate written expression 5 marks	AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in literary texts 10 marks	AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which literary texts are written and received 20 marks	AO5 Explore literary texts informed by different interpretations 10 marks
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