

## Hamlet: Act 1 Questions for Study

### **Act 1**

#### **Scene 1:**

1. Where does this play take place?
2. As the play opens, Horatio joins Marcellus and Bernardo at their night watch. Why has Horatio joined them?
3. In line 69, how does Horatio interpret the appearance of the ghost?
4. What three questions does Marcellus raise?
5. In a long speech (lines 79-107), Horatio answers Marcellus. Summarize as briefly as you can the events that have led to preparations for war.
6. In lines 130-139, what three reasons does Horatio list for the superstition of a ghost's returning from the grave?
7. Why do Horatio and Marcellus decide to tell Hamlet fails to list?

#### **Scene 2:**

8. What news does King Claudius announce at the opening of scene 2?
9. Why does Claudius send Cornelius and Voltimand to Norway? (lines 27-39)
10. What bothers Claudius and Gertrude about Hamlet's dress?
11. Why does Claudius want Hamlet to remain at court?
12. About how long has Hamlet's father been dead?
13. Explain why Hamlet says, "Frailty, thy name is woman!" (line 146)
14. At the end of scene 2, what is Hamlet's plan?

#### **Scene 3:**

15. Why does Laertes warn his sister Ophelia not to place too much hope in Hamlet's attentions to her?
16. What does Laertes say must govern Hamlet's marriage choice?

17. What advice does Ophelia in turn give to Laertes?

18. In lines 58-80, Polonius gives a great deal of advice to his son Laertes. In this speech, Polonius covers nine items of advice. In your own words, explain what the following means:

a. (lines 59-60) "Give thy thoughts no tongue,/ Nor any unproportioned thought his act."

b. (line 68) "Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;"

c. (lines 75-77) "Neither a borrower nor a lender be;/ For loan oft loses both itself and friend,..."

19. What are Polonius's instructions to Ophelia about Hamlet?

#### **Scene 4:**

20. What is happening at the court while Hamlet, Horatio and Marcellus are on the platform?

21. Why does Hamlet denounce the custom of drunken celebration?

22. What happens at the end of scene 4?

#### **Scene 5:**

23. What does the Ghost reveal about the manner of his death?

24. What does the ghost tell Hamlet about his mother?

25. In lines 82-89, what tasks does the Ghost tell Hamlet to undertake?

26. In lines 172-173, what does Hamlet imply he may decide to do?