

Western Cape
Government

Education

Grade 12 Literature Setwork

NSC and SC Examination

Question Papers and Memoranda

(Marking Guidelines)

English Home Language: Drama - *Hamlet*



basic education

Department:
Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

All Examination Question Papers and
Marking Guidelines:

**Copyright Department of Basic
Education**

SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

HAMLET – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 10 (essay question) OR QUESTION 11 (contextual question).

QUESTION 10: HAMLET – ESSAY QUESTION

Gertrude and Ophelia's passivity makes them vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

[25]**QUESTION 11: HAMLET – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION**

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT E

GUILDENSTERN

But we both obey,

And here give up ourselves in the full bent,

To lay our service freely at your feet

To be commanded.

CLAUDIUS

Thanks Rosencrantz, and gentle Guildenstern.

GERTRUDE

Thanks Guildenstern, and gentle Rosencrantz,

And I beseech you instantly to visit

My too much changéd son. Go some of you

And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

GUILDENSTERN

Heavens make our presence and our practices

Pleasant and helpful to him!

GERTRUDE

Ay, amen!

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern off

Enter Polonius. He speaks apart with the king.

POLONIUS

The ambassadors from Norway, my good lord,

Are joyfully returned.

CLAUDIUS

Thou still hast been the father of good news.

POLONIUS

Have I, my lord? Assure you, my good liege,

I hold my duty as I hold my soul,

5

10

15



Both to my God and to my gracious king, And I do think, or else this brain of mine Hunts not the trail of policy so sure As it hath used to do, that I have found The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy. CLAUDIUS	20
O speak of that! That do I long to hear. POLONIUS	25
Give first admittance to th'ambassadors. My news shall be the fruit to that great feast. CLAUDIUS	
Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in. <i>Polonius off</i>	
He tells me, my dear Gertrude, he hath found The head and source of all your son's distemper.	30
...	
<i>[Re-enter Polonius]</i> POLONIUS	
You know sometimes he walks four hours together Here in the lobby. GERTRUDE	
So he does, indeed.	35
POLONIUS At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him. Be you and I behind an arras then. Mark the encounter.	
	[Act 2, Scene 2]

- 11.1 Refer to lines 1–4: 'But we both ...To be commanded.'
Explain what has prompted Claudius and Gertrude to send for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. (3)
- 11.2 Refer to line 8: 'My too much changéd son.'
Account for the change that has come upon Hamlet. (3)
- 11.3 Refer to lines 18–20: 'Assure you, ... my gracious king'.
Discuss how this statement is typical of Polonius's character. (3)
- 11.4 Refer to line 36: 'At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him.'
Based on your knowledge of the play as a whole, comment on the role Ophelia plays in influencing Hamlet's attitude toward women. (3)
- 11.5 Refer to lines 10–11: 'Heavens make our ... helpful to him!'
Comment on the irony of Guildenstern's words in the above lines. (3)

AND

EXTRACT F

CLAUDIUS

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murder! Pray can I not,
Though inclination be as sharp as will.
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent.

5

...

Enter Hamlet and pauses, seeing the King

HAMLET

(Approaches the entry to the lobby) Now might I do it pat, now he is
a-praying –

And now I'll do't *(He draws his sword)* and so he goes to heaven,
And so am I revenged. That would be scanned.

10

A villain kills my father, and for that
I his sole son do this same villain send
To heaven.

Why, this is bait and salary, not revenge.

He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May,
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?

15

But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him. And am I then revenged

To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
No.

20

He sheathes his sword

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent,
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,
Or in th'incestuous pleasure of his bed,
At game, a-swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't,

25

Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damned and black
As hell whereto it goes. My mother stays.
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

30

Off

CLAUDIUS

(Rises) My words fly up, my thoughts remain below.
Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

35

[Act 3, Scene 3]

11.6 Refer to line 3: 'Pray can I not'.

Account for Claudius's inability to pray for forgiveness.

(3)

- 11.7 Refer to Hamlet's words and the stage directions in lines 7–9: '(Approaches the entry ... draws his sword)'.

If you were the director of a production of *Hamlet*, how would you instruct the actor to deliver these lines? Pay specific attention to body language and tone. Motivate your instructions. (3)

- 11.8 Hamlet's hesitation in taking revenge is a sign of cowardice.

Critically comment on the extent to which you agree with this statement. (4)

[25]



SECTION C: DRAMA**HAMLET – William Shakespeare****QUESTION 10: HAMLET – ESSAY QUESTION**

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

Candidates might agree or disagree with this statement, or they may offer a mixed response.

- Gertrude and Ophelia live in a patriarchal society and are considered to be frail and weak-minded. This enables their being manipulated and exploited.
- Soon after the death of her husband, Gertrude is seduced into marrying her brother-in-law, Claudius, an act that earns the anger of her son, Hamlet.
- Gertrude's hasty marriage is evidence of her dependence on men and inability to take control of her own life. Her shallowness and desire for status and affection make her easy prey for Claudius. Claudius's marriage to Gertrude might be seen as opportunistic and as a means of usurping Prince Hamlet's position as king.
- Hamlet's perception of women as being dishonest and fickle is influenced by his mother's allowing Claudius to seduce her.
- Claudius expects Gertrude to reject Hamlet and to be loyal to him only. Although Gertrude protects Hamlet from Claudius after Hamlet has killed Polonius, she goes along with Claudius's plan to send Hamlet into exile.
- Ophelia is portrayed as gentle, loyal and obedient and looks to her father and brother for advice and guidance. She is viewed as naïve and innocent and unable to know her own mind.
- When Polonius asks Ophelia to reject Hamlet's attentions, she meekly obeys him, returning Hamlet's gifts. She allows Polonius to use her to spy on Hamlet.
- Ophelia is on the receiving end of Hamlet's anger and disillusionment with all women. He uses Ophelia to reinforce the impression that he is mad, which aids him in implementing his plan of revenge. Ophelia passively accepts his abuse. After Hamlet kills Polonius, Ophelia becomes mad with grief and drowns.
- Gertrude continues to display her concern for Hamlet and requests that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern discover the cause of his behaviour. She also summons Hamlet to her chamber because of his behaviour at the play, which upset Claudius. She admits that her marriage to Claudius was 'o'er-hasty', but never actively opposes Claudius. Her final act of warning Hamlet about the poisoned wine shows that she is able to act independently and that she is prepared to sacrifice herself for her son. This displays her strength and loyalty, not passivity.
- Ophelia occasionally acts independently. When Laertes warns her about Hamlet's dishonourable intentions, she thanks him, but accuses him of double-standards. During the play, she challenges Hamlet's sexual innuendos.
- In her madness, Ophelia becomes outspoken. She gives Claudius flowers symbolising ingratitude and infidelity, thus indicating her disapproval of his actions.

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.]

[25]

QUESTION 11: HAMLET – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

- 11.1 Hamlet has been behaving strangely and this has led to the summoning of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two of Hamlet's school friends, to Elsinore. The King and Queen seem to be concerned about his wellbeing and hope that his friends will discover the cause of his behaviour and that their presence might lift his spirits.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

- 11.2 Hamlet is grieving over the death of his father and he has fallen into a state of depression. His uncle, Claudius, whom he detests, has been crowned the new king of Denmark, despite the fact that Hamlet is heir to the throne. He is shocked to discover that Claudius has also married Hamlet's mother very soon after his father's death. Hamlet suspects foul play and feigns madness as a means of corroborating the Ghost's allegations.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

- 11.3 Polonius's self-serving behaviour is evident here. He is intent on ingratiating himself with Claudius. He is unscrupulous and, by supporting Claudius's kingship, has secured the position as Claudius's chief councillor. His belief in his superior intellect leads to his making unfounded assumptions regarding the reason for Hamlet's behaviour. In order to advance his own prospects, he does not hesitate to use his daughter as bait in order to spy on Hamlet for the King. His spying on the conversation between Gertrude and Hamlet later in the play is also an attempt to help Claudius.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

- 11.4 Ophelia is unwittingly used by her father and Claudius to discover Hamlet's secrets. Hamlet's view of women as liars and deceivers is reinforced by Ophelia's lying to him about her father's whereabouts; he is aware that Polonius is eavesdropping on their conversation. Gertrude's betrayal of Hamlet's father and himself has already caused him to mistrust women, and Ophelia's actions reinforce his poor opinion of them.

Candidates might refer to Hamlet's attitude toward women as being more complex and more sympathetic; his uncertainty about Ophelia might support this assertion.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

- 11.5 Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Hamlet's friends and should show care, support and loyalty. They are expected to protect him from harm. In these lines, Guildenstern pledges that they will do all in their power to help Hamlet. However, they readily accede to being exploited by Claudius to spy on Hamlet, with the expectation of a reward. Later in the play they agree to Claudius's desire to exile Hamlet from Denmark. This betrayal almost leads to Hamlet's death. 'Practices' is ambiguous – it could connote manipulative, dishonest behaviour.

[Award 3 marks only if irony is fully discussed.] (3)

- 11.6 Although Claudius acknowledges the depth and severity of his crime and wrestles with his conscience, his attempts to pray for forgiveness for the murder of his brother are unsuccessful because he cannot bring himself to be truly repentant. His greed for power and his reluctance to give up his queen and throne overcome any desire to be truly remorseful, even though he understands that he might spend eternity in hell.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

- 11.7 Hamlet might creep up stealthily behind Claudius, his hand ready to draw his sword or he might stand behind the kneeling Claudius and look down at him. Hamlet's tone might be eager/satisfied/determined. Hamlet's suspicions of Claudius's guilt have been confirmed and there is no longer any reason for him to delay avenging his father's murder. He finally has the opportunity to kill the man whom he detests so intensely.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate discusses both body language and tone and includes a justification.] (3)

- 11.8 **AGREE**
Hamlet's procrastination is simply a way of avoiding taking action. Although he now has proof of Claudius's guilt and realises that his vengeance is justified, his reasons for not acting are simply excuses that might be seen as evidence of his cowardice. The time and opportunity have provided themselves, yet he is not brave enough to take advantage of these and confront Claudius. His indecisiveness paralyses him and he postpones his revenge. Hamlet himself questions his bravery when he compares himself to Fortinbras and Laertes.

OR

DISAGREE

Rather than being a coward, Hamlet is an intellectual. He is a rational thinker and does not want to be impulsive. Initially, Hamlet delays taking revenge because he needs to verify the ghost's accusations. It is Hamlet's sensitivity that causes him to delay avenging his father's death. His theological beliefs, moral fortitude and restraint prevent him from killing Claudius while he is at prayer. Furthermore, in Hamlet's desire for revenge, he wants Claudius to suffer the same torments of hell to which Claudius has condemned his father by not allowing King Hamlet to confess his sins or find salvation. Hamlet's hesitation is justifiable and not a sign of cowardice.

[Accept valid alternative/mixed responses.]

[Award 4 marks for any three ideas well discussed OR four ideas.] (4)
[25]

For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passeth show—
These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

CLAUDIUS

'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father;
But you must know your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his; and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term

25

To do obsequious sorrow. But to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course

30

Of impious stubbornness, 'tis unmanly grief,
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschooled.

35

[Act 1, Scene 2]

21.1 Refer to line 2: 'A little more than kin, and less than kind.'

Account for Hamlet's reaction to Claudius's greeting.

(3)

21.2 Refer to lines 5–10: 'Good Hamlet, cast ... nature to eternity.'

Suggest what motivates Gertrude to utter these words in the above lines.

(3)

21.3 Refer to lines 30–32: 'But to persever ... 'tis unmanly grief'.

In the light of later events, comment on whether Claudius is being sincere.

(3)

21.4 Refer to line 33: 'It shows a will most incorrect to heaven'.

Discuss the irony in this line in the context of the play.

(3)

AND

EXTRACT L

HAMLET

(to GERTRUDE) Madam, how like you this play?

GERTRUDE

The lady protests too much, methinks.

HAMLET

O, but she'll keep her word.

CLAUDIUS

Have you heard the argument? Is there no
offence in't?

5

HAMLET

No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest. No
offence i'th' world.

CLAUDIUS

What do you call the play?

HAMLET

The Mousetrap. Marry, how? Tropically. This
play is the image of a murder done in Vienna. Gonzago

10

is the Duke's name, his wife Baptista. You shall see anon. 'Tis a knavish piece of work; but what o' that? Your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not. Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung. <i>Enter PLAYER LUCIANUS</i>	15
This is one Lucianus, nephew to the King. ...	
HAMLET (To LUCIANUS) Begin, murderer. Pox, leave thy damnable faces and begin. Come: 'the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge'.	20
PLAYER LUCIANUS Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing, Confederate season, else no creature seeing; Thou mixture rank of midnight weeds collected, With Hecate's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected, Thy natural magic and dire property On wholesome life usurp immediately. <i>He pours the poison in the PLAYER KING'S ear</i>	25
HAMLET He poisons him i'th' garden for's estate. His name's Gonzago. The story is extant, and writ in choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.	30
OPHELIA The King rises. HAMLET What, frightened with false fire? GERTRUDE (to CLAUDIUS) How fares my lord?	35
POLONIUS Give o'er the play. CLAUDIUS Give me some light. Away.	
[Act 3, Scene 2]	

- 21.5 Refer to lines 4–5: 'Have you heard ... no/offence in't?'
Account for Claudius's question. (3)
- 21.6 Discuss the significance of Hamlet's choice of play, *The Mousetrap* (line 9). (3)
- 21.7 Refer to lines 17–20: '(To LUCIANUS)/Begin, murderer. ... bellow for/ revenge.'
If you were the director of a production of *Hamlet*, how would you instruct the actor to deliver these lines? Pay specific attention to body language and tone. Motivate your instructions. (3)
- 21.8 Hamlet resorts to deception to serve his own interests.
Do you agree with this statement? Justify your response. (4)
- [25]**

SECTION C: DRAMA**HAMLET – William Shakespeare****QUESTION 20: HAMLET – ESSAY QUESTION**

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 37 for the rubric to assess this question.

Candidates might argue that this statement is not entirely true and discuss how Hamlet's behaviour has either intended or unintended consequences or they might offer a mixed response.

- From the time he learns of his father's murder, Hamlet is obsessed with the need to avenge his death. This sets him on a course that has many unintended consequences.
- Hamlet intends for his antic disposition to mislead his enemies and to allow him to investigate the Ghost's accusations. It serves, however, to make Claudius suspicious of him and leads to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's spying on him and ultimately their deaths.
- Hamlet's introspection, self-doubt and anxiety cause him to procrastinate, thus giving Claudius the opportunity to act against him.
- Although Hamlet has the perfect opportunity to kill Claudius while he is at prayer, he decides against it, as he does not want Claudius's soul to ascend to heaven. His delay gives Claudius time to come up with a plan to kill him. Realising that Hamlet poses a threat to him, Claudius sends Hamlet to England where he will be executed by the English king.
- Hamlet's boarding of the pirate ship has the unintended consequence of enabling him to return to Denmark and escape execution.
- Hamlet unintentionally kills Polonius when he realises that he is being spied upon in his mother's room. As a result, Laertes is determined to avenge his father's death.
- Hamlet's cruel treatment of Ophelia is a result of his disillusionment with his mother, and women in general. His brutal rejection of her and her father's death at Hamlet's hands cause Ophelia to descend into madness and she drowns soon after.
- In order to eliminate the threat that Hamlet poses to him, Claudius poisons Hamlet's wine at the duel. Gertrude's death after drinking the poison is a consequence that neither Hamlet nor Claudius could have predicted.
- Fortinbras's becoming King of Denmark is another unexpected outcome of Hamlet's commitment to revenge.
- Candidates might argue that much of what Hamlet does is orchestrated and that he has a very clear outcome in mind. They might refer to his deliberate act of feigning madness and his plan to stage a play that mirrors Claudius's murderous and incestuous actions. Both these acts have the intended outcome of confirming Claudius's guilt.

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.]

[25]

QUESTION 21: HAMLET – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

- 21.1 Hamlet is being disrespectful toward Claudius. He is resentful of Claudius's calling him 'my son' because he feels that Claudius has no right to usurp his father's role. He disapproves of Claudius's marriage to his mother. He is indignant and tries to distance himself from Claudius's familiarity.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 21.2 Gertrude displays motherly concern for Hamlet's well-being. She wants him to come to terms with his father's death. She is distressed by the animosity Hamlet feels toward Claudius. She might also feel guilty for having contributed to his melancholic state of mind with her hasty marriage to Claudius and she urges him to accept her marriage. She appears to be supportive of Claudius as he attempts to engage Hamlet.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 21.3 Claudius is insincere. He appears to be concerned and attempts to persuade Hamlet that his behaviour, though understandable, is unreasonable. His words are also patronising and merely an attempt to win Hamlet over. He also subtly insults Hamlet by referring to his grief as 'unmanly'. He sees Hamlet as a threat and uses his words to undermine him. Later Claudius has Hamlet spied upon and plots his death.

[It is unlikely that candidates will consider Claudius's advice as sincere. However, treat all responses on their merits.]

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 21.4 Claudius is saying that Hamlet's excessive mourning is against the will of heaven. However, Claudius's murder of his brother and marriage to his brother's wife are far greater sins against heaven. The murder violates the divine right of kings and the marriage would have been regarded as incestuous. His immoral plots to murder Hamlet are also 'incorrect to heaven'.

[Award 3 marks only if irony is well discussed.] (3)

- 21.5 Claudius is starting to become suspicious that the play is directed at him as he suspects that Hamlet is aware that he has murdered King Hamlet. He is concerned that his evil deeds might be exposed.

[Award 3 marks for three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 21.6 The plot of *The Mousetrap* closely resembles King Hamlet's murder. Its title suggests entrapment. Hamlet intends to use the play to trap Claudius into revealing his guilt. Hamlet is not prepared to act against Claudius until he has conclusive proof. His strategy is effective because, as he summarises the plot, Claudius acts in a guilty manner.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 21.7 Hamlet might clap his hands/rap on his chair/stand up and gesture to indicate to Lucianus to begin without further delay. His tone might be impatient/frustrated/demanding as he is eager for the play to begin and his suspicions about Claudius to be confirmed. He is excited as he is sure that Claudius will reveal his guilt.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to body language and tone and includes a justification.] (3)

- 21.8 AGREE

Hamlet's deception might be considered to be motivated by self-interest as he has been denied his rightful position as king. His intense hatred of Claudius provokes him to seek retribution. He feels betrayed by Gertrude's marriage and his feigned madness is a means of hurting her. Initially, his deception of Ophelia is part of his plan to maintain the façade of madness. However, he feels betrayed when he realises that she has become an instrument of Claudius's machinations, and his cruel rejection of her is purely selfish.

OR

DISAGREE

Although Hamlet is desperate to avenge his father's murder and uses deception to confirm his suspicions of Claudius's guilt, his reasons for doing so are more altruistic than selfish. Hamlet is motivated by his concern that Denmark has become 'rotten' under Claudius's reign and is determined to restore his father's legacy. He is concerned about the salvation of his father's eternal soul as his father died without receiving absolution.

[Candidates may make reference to other examples.]

[Accept valid alternative/mixed responses.]

[Award 4 marks for any three ideas well discussed OR any four distinct ideas.]

(4)
[25]

SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

HAMLET – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 10 (essay question) OR QUESTION 11 (contextual question).

QUESTION 10: HAMLET – ESSAY QUESTION

Hamlet is responsible for his own tragic fate.

Assess the validity of this statement.


Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

[25]

QUESTION 11: HAMLET – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT E

HORATIO Not I, my lord, by heaven.		
MARCELLUS Nor I, my lord.		
HAMLET How say you then, would heart of man once think it? But you'll be secret?		5
HORATIO AND MARCELLUS Ay, by heaven, my lord.		
HAMLET There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark But he's an arrant knave.		
HORATIO There needs no ghost, my lord, come from the grave To tell us this.		10
HAMLET Why, right, you are i'th' right, And so without more circumstance at all I hold it fit that we shake hands and part, You as your business and desires shall point you – For every man has business and desire, Such as it is – and for mine own poor part, Look you, I'll go pray.		15
...		

HORATIO O day and night, but this is wondrous strange!	
HAMLET And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.	20
There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in our philosophy. But come, Here as before, never, so help you mercy, How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself – As I perchance hereafter shall think meet To put an antic disposition on –	25
That you at such time seeing me never shall, With arms encumbered thus, or this headshake, Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase As 'Well, we know' or 'We could an if we would', Or 'If we list to speak', or 'There be, an if they might', Or such ambiguous giving out, to note That you know aught of me – this not to do, So grace and mercy at your most need help you, Swear.	30 35
	[Act 1, Scene 5]

- 11.1 Refer to line 5: 'But you'll be secret?'
Account for Hamlet's concern with secrecy at this point in the play. (3)
- 11.2 Explain the Ghost's motive in approaching Hamlet. (3)
- 11.3 Refer to lines 17–18: '– and for mine own poor part,'/'Look you, I'll go pray.'
Discuss the extent to which it would be justifiable for the audience to pity Hamlet at this point in the play. (3)
- 11.4 Refer to line 26: 'To put an antic disposition on –'.
Critically comment on Hamlet's decision to pretend to be mad. (3)

AND

EXTRACT F

Enter GERTRUDE *and* POLONIUS

POLONIUS

He will come straight. Look you lay home to him.
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with,
And that your grace hath screened and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll silence me e'en here.
Pray you be round with him.

5

HAMLET

(offstage) Mother, mother, mother!

GERTRUDE

I'll warrant you. Fear me not. Withdraw; I hear
him coming.

POLONIUS *hides behind the arras. Enter* HAMLET

10

HAMLET

Now, mother, what's the matter?

GERTRUDE

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

HAMLET

Mother, you have my father much offended.

GERTRUDE

Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

HAMLET

Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

15

GERTRUDE

Why, how now, Hamlet?

HAMLET

What's the matter now?

GERTRUDE

Have you forgot me?

HAMLET

No, by the rood, not so.

You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife.

20

But – would you were not so – you are my mother.

GERTRUDE

Nay, then, I'll set those to you that can speak.

HAMLET

Come, come, and sit you down. You shall not
budge.

You go not till I set you up a glass

25

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

GERTRUDE

What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?

Help, help, ho!

POLONIUS

(behind the arras) What ho! Help, help, help!

HAMLET

How now, a rat? Dead for a ducat, dead.

30

He thrusts his sword through the arras

<p>POLONIUS O, I am slain!</p> <p>GERTRUDE (to HAMLET) O me, what hast thou done?</p> <p>HAMLET Nay, I know not. Is it the King?</p> <p>GERTRUDE O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!</p> <p>HAMLET A bloody deed – almost as bad, good mother, As kill a king and marry with his brother.</p>	35
---	----

[Act 3, Scene 4]

- 11.5 Refer to lines 4–5: 'And that your grace ...'/'Much heat and him.'
Suggest how Gertrude's later actions will validate this statement. (3)
- 11.6 Refer to line 12: 'Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.'
Comment on the irony of Gertrude's words. (3)
- 11.7 Refer to lines 23–26: 'Come, come, and ...'/'part of you.'
If you were the director of a production of *Hamlet*, how would you instruct the actor to deliver these lines? Justify your instructions with reference to both body language and tone. (3)
- 11.8 Using this extract as a starting point and drawing on your knowledge of the play as a whole, critically comment on the nature of betrayal as presented in the play. (4)
- [25]**

SECTION C: DRAMA**HAMLET – William Shakespeare****QUESTION 10: HAMLET – ESSAY QUESTION**

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 24 for the rubric to assess this question.

A mixed response would demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the text.

- Hamlet struggles to reconcile his conscience with the need to avenge his father's death. His dilemma is that he is prone to philosophic speculation and a desire to make judgements based on reason. He vacillates rather than reacts. While some might construe Hamlet's behaviour as weak and see him as responsible for his own fate, others might argue that Hamlet's vacillations are a consequence of his goodness.
- Hamlet has no control over certain events: the murder of his father, Claudius's ascension to the throne and his marriage to Gertrude.
- Hamlet acknowledges that fate plays a role in the way in which matters unfold: he says that 'there's a divinity that shapes our ends'. This suggests that, although Hamlet's flaws may contribute to his downfall, there are elements beyond his control.
- Fate plays a role when the ship Hamlet travels on is attacked by pirates, resulting in his being saved and returning to Denmark.
- The machinations of Claudius, his collusion with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as well as with Polonius and Laertes, make it impossible for Hamlet to be held solely accountable for the tragic unfolding of events.
- When Hamlet does act, he does so impulsively (e.g. the killing of Polonius and his role in the killing of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern). He avoids acting with premeditation. He struggles to react to the Ghost's request.
- Candidates might argue that Hamlet's assumed madness is a fatal error of judgement that contributes to the tragic consequences.
- Candidates might argue that Hamlet is solely responsible for his fate because of his self-pitying attitude and his procrastination. The consequent train of events is a result of his failure to act timeously. He ought to have disclosed the presence of the Ghost to Gertrude and then perhaps events might have taken a different turn.
- Candidates who argue that Hamlet has no control over events will focus on issues of fate and/or restrictive circumstances rather than Hamlet's decisions.

[Credit valid alternative responses.]

[25]

QUESTION 11: HAMLET – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

- 11.1 Hamlet is unsure of the reason for the Ghost's appearance and considers the possibility of the Ghost having malignant intentions. Hamlet realises that if Claudius knows about the Ghost's accusations, Hamlet's life would be in danger. Claudius will do everything in his power to maintain his throne.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 11.2 The Ghost of King Hamlet wants Hamlet to know that he did not die of natural causes but was murdered. He names Claudius as his murderer and accuses him of seducing Gertrude and marrying her with such haste. The Ghost wants Hamlet to avenge his death.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 11.3 The audience might pity Hamlet, who is young and feeling overwhelmed by the information he has just received. He finds it difficult to accept the Ghost's indictment without proof. He is already deeply disturbed about his mother's marriage to Claudius and is perhaps feeling insecure about his ability to handle the mammoth task imposed on him.

OR

Candidates might argue that one cannot pity Hamlet at this stage. He is angry about the union between Claudius and Gertrude and the Ghost offers him an opportunity to avenge his death. He ought therefore to grab the opportunity and react immediately to rectify a situation that he finds untenable.

[Accept mixed responses.]

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

- 11.4 Hamlet's decision to feign madness serves as a useful weapon in his struggle against Claudius. It will allow him to gather information unobtrusively before he reacts to the Ghost's intimations. It will enable him to allay any suspicions that anyone might have while he plots his revenge.

Moreover, it is one of Hamlet's modes of procrastination in that he does not face what he regards as a distasteful/confusing/intimidating task.

Candidates might refer to Hamlet's feigned madness being a distraction to his seeking revenge.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

- 11.5 Gertrude will later defend Hamlet's killing of Polonius when she informs Claudius that Hamlet reacted to a noise that he had heard and was unaware that it was Polonius behind the arras. She downplays Hamlet's agitated and violent state of mind. She also warns him of the poisoned drink in an attempt to save him from Claudius's treachery.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

- 11.6 Gertrude chastises Hamlet for offending Claudius. Ironically, in his response, Hamlet indicates that it is his mother who has, in fact, offended *his* father, King Hamlet.

Furthermore, Hamlet feels that the offence is not his but hers because she not only married the man who murdered her husband, but also married him soon after her husband's death.

[Award 3 marks if one example of irony is identified and discussed.] (3)

- 11.7 Hamlet is very angry and violently confronts Gertrude and prevents her from leaving. He may push her toward a chair or even perhaps place his hand on his sword in a threatening manner. His tone might be threatening/angry/forceful/assertive. He wants Gertrude to acknowledge her betrayal of him and his father by marrying Claudius.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to body language and tone, and includes a justification.] (3)

- 11.8 Betrayal has to do with breaking faith/trust for one's own benefit. In this extract, Hamlet feels that his mother has betrayed both him and his father. Claudius's killing of his brother betrays family loyalties and also defies the concept of the divine right of kings. Characters betray others for personal gain: Claudius's usurping of the throne; to curry favour, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's agreeing to betray a friend; to assert control, Polonius's arranging to have Laertes spied upon.

[Candidates may make reference to other examples.]

[Award 4 marks only if reference is made to this extract and the play as a whole.]

(4)
[25]

SECTION C: DRAMA

Answer ONLY on the play you have studied.

HAMLET – William Shakespeare

Answer EITHER QUESTION 10 (essay question) OR QUESTION 11 (contextual question).

QUESTION 10: HAMLET – ESSAY QUESTION

The problem of making moral choices is a significant issue in the play.

Critically assess the validity of this statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages).

[25]**QUESTION 11: HAMLET – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION**

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT E

HAMLET

Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between heaven and earth? We are arrant knaves, all. Believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

5

OPHELIA

At home, my lord.

HAMLET

Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool nowhere but in's own house. Farewell.

OPHELIA

O help him, you sweet heavens!

HAMLET

If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go, farewell. Or if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly, too.

15

Farewell.

OPHELIA

O heavenly powers, restore him!

20

[Act 3, Scene 1]

LAERTES

And so have I a noble father lost,
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Who has, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger, on mount, of all the age 30
For her perfections. But my revenge will come.

CLAUDIUS

Break not your sleeps for that. You must not
think
That we are made of stuff so flat and dull
That we can let our beard be shook with danger, 35
And think it pastime. You shortly shall hear more.
I loved your father, and we love ourself.
And that, I hope, will teach you to imagine –

[Act 4, Scene 7]

- 11.6 Refer to line 14: 'Lives almost by his looks'.
Explain how Gertrude's final act will clearly indicate her love for Hamlet. (3)
- 11.7 Refer to line 2: 'And you must put me in your heart for friend'.
Discuss the irony in this line. (3)
- 11.8 Refer to lines 27–31: 'And so have ... revenge will come.'
If you were the director of a production of *Hamlet*, describe how you would direct the actor playing Laertes to deliver these lines. Justify your answer with reference to both body language and tone. (3)
- 11.9 Claudius is a villain without any redeeming qualities.
Using your knowledge of the play as a whole, critically discuss the extent to which you agree with this statement. (4)
- [25]**

SECTION C: DRAMA**HAMLET – William Shakespeare****QUESTION 10: HAMLET – ESSAY QUESTION**

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

Characters find themselves in situations where they allow themselves to compromise their morality when it comes to the choices they make.

- Claudius chooses to disregard morality when he kills his brother and pursues a reckless course of self-protection, including collusion with Polonius, plotting Hamlet's death and conspiring with Laertes. His usurpation of the throne defies the divine right of kings.
- Claudius and Gertrude's decision to marry immediately after the death of King Hamlet suggests single-mindedness in pursuing their own interests.
- Gertrude's resolve to gloss over Hamlet's role in the killing of Polonius is an attempt to protect her son. She also wants to make him appear remorseful and therefore less guilty.
- Laertes compromises his morality when he conspires with Claudius to kill Hamlet.
- Laertes and Fortinbras resolve to avenge their fathers' deaths, instead of allowing justice to take its course.
- Polonius's decision to forbid a relationship between Ophelia and Hamlet, and his use of Ophelia to spy on Hamlet, contribute to the ensuing tragedy.
- Hamlet's plan to feign madness is a ploy to confuse his enemies and to give him time to investigate Claudius's guilt.
- Hamlet, as a highly moral person, does not act as hastily as Laertes does to take revenge. He sets up the play within the play in order to determine Claudius's guilt or innocence. When he has the evidence that Claudius is indeed guilty, he is galvanised into action. He upbraids his mother, kills Polonius but does not yet have the opportunity to attack Claudius since he is immediately sent to England.
- Hamlet might be regarded as lacking courage and moral resolution. His treatment of Ophelia might be seen as cruel and unwarranted. He has an opportunity to kill Claudius but does not, convincing himself that had he killed him then, Claudius would have gone to Heaven – a thought he finds morally reprehensible.
- Candidates might argue that Hamlet's decision to change the contents of the letter carried by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is hardly moral.

[Credit valid alternative responses.]

[25]

SECTION C: DRAMA**HAMLET – William Shakespeare****QUESTION 10: HAMLET – ESSAY QUESTION**

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

Characters find themselves in situations where they allow themselves to compromise their morality when it comes to the choices they make.

- Claudius chooses to disregard morality when he kills his brother and pursues a reckless course of self-protection, including collusion with Polonius, plotting Hamlet's death and conspiring with Laertes. His usurpation of the throne defies the divine right of kings.
- Claudius and Gertrude's decision to marry immediately after the death of King Hamlet suggests single-mindedness in pursuing their own interests.
- Gertrude's resolve to gloss over Hamlet's role in the killing of Polonius is an attempt to protect her son. She also wants to make him appear remorseful and therefore less guilty.
- Laertes compromises his morality when he conspires with Claudius to kill Hamlet.
- Laertes and Fortinbras resolve to avenge their fathers' deaths, instead of allowing justice to take its course.
- Polonius's decision to forbid a relationship between Ophelia and Hamlet, and his use of Ophelia to spy on Hamlet, contribute to the ensuing tragedy.
- Hamlet's plan to feign madness is a ploy to confuse his enemies and to give him time to investigate Claudius's guilt.
- Hamlet, as a highly moral person, does not act as hastily as Laertes does to take revenge. He sets up the play within the play in order to determine Claudius's guilt or innocence. When he has the evidence that Claudius is indeed guilty, he is galvanised into action. He upbraids his mother, kills Polonius but does not yet have the opportunity to attack Claudius since he is immediately sent to England.
- Hamlet might be regarded as lacking courage and moral resolution. His treatment of Ophelia might be seen as cruel and unwarranted. He has an opportunity to kill Claudius but does not, convincing himself that had he killed him then, Claudius would have gone to Heaven – a thought he finds morally reprehensible.
- Candidates might argue that Hamlet's decision to change the contents of the letter carried by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is hardly moral.

[Credit valid alternative responses.]

[25]

QUESTION 11: HAMLET – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

- 11.1 Hamlet is angry with Ophelia as he thinks that she has colluded with Polonius and Claudius against him. He feels a sense of betrayal at her actions. Gertrude's hasty re-marriage influences him to perceive all women as faithless. He responds in a vicious, insulting manner, wanting to hurt her as she has hurt him. He suspects her of being dishonest and deceitful.

[Award 2 marks for any two ideas.] (2)

- 11.2 Hamlet is angry/bitter/tortured/despairing at his father's death and his mother's marriage to Claudius. He finds life too painful to bear and wishes that he had never been born.

Some candidates might indicate that he wishes he had not been Gertrude's son.

[Award 2 marks for two ideas well discussed.] (2)

- 11.3 Hamlet is aware that Ophelia is lying about the whereabouts of Polonius. He is frustrated that Ophelia continues lying to him. Hamlet appears to be aware that Polonius is spying on them. Hamlet knows about the meddling/interfering nature of Polonius and feels certain that he is probably plotting something.

[Award 2 marks for ONE reason well discussed.] (2)

- 11.4 Both Polonius and Laertes constantly bombard Ophelia with restrictive instructions. Laertes warns her that she is not of the same rank as Hamlet and that he is merely trifling with her. He claims that, as a Prince, Hamlet would not have a say as to whom he marries. Polonius questions Ophelia about her relationship with Hamlet and refers to her as 'green', implying she is foolish to believe that there is any future for them. Polonius instructs Ophelia to break all ties with Hamlet, to which she passively submits.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas] (3)

- 11.5 Candidates who blame Hamlet for Ophelia's death might argue that instead of supporting Ophelia at a time when Polonius forbids her from seeing him, Hamlet actually catapults her into depression because of the way in which he treats her. He is rude and nasty, declaring that he no longer loves her, and that, compounded by her father's death, results in her depression. Ophelia is too frail and innocent and therefore incapable of coping emotionally with the trauma she experiences when Hamlet kills Polonius.

On the other hand, candidates might argue that Hamlet cannot be held responsible for the manner in which Ophelia deals with her personal issues. She is an individual who is responsible for making her own choices. She allows herself to be subjugated and follows her father's instructions even though she hurts Hamlet in the process and therefore she is responsible for her fate.

[Credit mixed/valid alternative responses.]

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 11.6 During the duel between Laertes and Hamlet, Gertrude drinks from the poisoned cup intended for Hamlet. Before she dies, she manages to warn Hamlet that the drink is poisoned. This is to prevent him from drinking from the cup and dying. This reflects a shift in her loyalty and reinforces the love she has for him and her desire for reconciliation.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)

- 11.7 Although Claudius professes to act in friendship and love for Laertes, he has an ulterior motive. As a friend, Claudius should have Laertes's best interests at heart, but he intends to use this supposed friendship to manipulate Laertes into killing Hamlet.

[Award 3 marks only if irony discussed.] (3)

- 11.8 Laertes might be pensive and deeply sorrowful, having lost his father and having to deal with Ophelia's descent into madness. There is, however, a sense of his pent-up anger at what he perceives is a personal affront. He is determined to get revenge. He might pace up and down, in an attempt to control his emotions. He might bunch his fists or point to himself, emphasising his personal loss. His tone might be sombre, grave and bitter.

[Accept valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to body language and tone, and includes a justification.] (3)

- 11.9 **AGREE.**
Claudius murders his brother, usurps the throne and marries the wife of his victim to feed his ambition. He shows no concern for the spiritual state in which his brother died or the impact his actions will have on others. He shows insensitivity/callousness by advising Hamlet to stop mourning. He later conspires with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as well as with Laertes, to kill Hamlet so as to protect himself.

OR

DISAGREE.

Claudius is not entirely evil as he is tormented by guilt when he kneels to pray. Although he has a genuine desire for redemption, he is not prepared to give up any of his ill-gotten gains. Thus he remains morally compromised. He has genuine affection for his wife but fails to react swiftly enough to prevent her death because he does not want to expose his culpability. He might be regarded as a good statesman because of his ability to avert a war with Norway.

[Credit mixed/valid alternative responses.]

[Award 4 marks for three ideas well discussed OR four distinct ideas.] (4)
[25]