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English Literature - Analytical Literature Review

TITLE: Hamlet

AUTHOR: William Shakespeare

<p>Historical context - what do you know about the author's time (political, social, philosophical) that is relevant to the text and its theme? During Elizabethan England, all actors were male and acting was considered equal to prostitution. There are many Catholic themes, such as Ophelia's burial and the ghost being in purgatory.</p>		
<p>Setting - location, region, country, historical period - how does setting influence characterization? How does setting influence theme? Medieval Denmark, ghosts are real</p>	<p>Author Biography - what do you know about the author that gives information about the text, its themes, and its significance? William Shakespeare had a son named Hamnet, whom he may have drawn inspiration from. Aristotle held the belief that drama should focus on action, and not character. <i>Hamlet</i> goes against this in the fact that interest in the play originates from Hamlet's soliloquies.</p>	
<p>Inciting Incident - what character and/or events cause the conflict? How does the inciting incident inform theme? Hamlet, frustrated with the death of his father and the marriage of his uncle and mother, is visited by his father's ghost and told of his murder. This event was the catalyst for all conflict in the text, leading to everyone's murder.</p>	<p>Internal Conflict - What characters struggle internally? How and why? Does this conflict inform theme? Hamlet struggles with the the death of his father and the marriage of his uncle and mother, his erratic relationship with Ophelia, Hamlet shows signs of the Oedipus Complex when he is angry at his mother for marrying Claudius and begs her to leave him.</p>	<p>External Conflict- Between whom/what? Why? How does conflict inform theme? Hamlet killed Claudius and Polonius, Ophelia committed suicide, Gertude died from drinking poison, and Hamlet and Laertes killed each other with the poison.</p>
<p>Symbolism - abstract or concrete? What are they? How does symbolism inform theme? Skull of Yorick is symbolic in the form that Hamlet contemplates</p>	<p>Tone - How is the author's and/or speaker's attitude evident in the text? Foreboding, melancholy</p>	

about how life flows in all living things; beginning with death, a maggot eating the dead person, a fish eating the maggot, and a living person eating the fish.

Characterization - Name & Analysis of major characters. how and what type - flat/round? Static/dynamic? Stock? Protagonist/Antagonist/Foil? Motivation? Attitudes? How does characterization inform theme?

Hamlet - Son of the deceased King Hamlet and nephew of Claudius

Claudius - Murdered his brother King Hamlet and married King Hamlet's wife

Polonius - Verbose servant who has a habit of creating problems

Ophelia - Hamlet's lover and daughter of Polonius, goes insane and commits suicide

Gertrude - Hamlet's mother, unaware of her husband's murder

Horatio - Hamlet's best friend

Laertes - Son of Polonius, hates Hamlet

Figurative language and literary devices - what devices are most prominent? What do they mean? How does the meaning relate to the theme?

Insanity, dramatic irony through soliloquies, Hamlet the anti-hero

Universal application - What specific themes are relevant to life/the human condition beyond the pages of the text? Answer "so what?" for the themes—why does this text matter?

The Oedipus Complex is apparent in Hamlet, Ophelia's suicide resulting from insanity or lovesickness