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# *DC English IV*

## *World/British Literature*

*Teacher: Mr. Smith, room 1217*

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# *The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark*

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## *Summary of full play; in ten quick points*

1. King Hamlet of Denmark has died. His brother, Claudius, marries the widow queen, Gertrude, Prince Hamlet's mother. There are no other direct heirs to the throne, besides Hamlet.
2. The ghost of King Hamlet appears floating around the castle; *the ghost reveals to Prince Hamlet that he was murdered by Claudius.* He wants Hamlet to avenge his death. As a result, Hamlet begins acting irrational. *Other characters speculate that he is crazy—or consider if he is just acting out.* In a moment of extreme depression, or calculated anger, *he questions the point of human aspiration; we are no better than animals.*
3. *Hamlet contemplates suicide.* He later rejects his girlfriend, Ophelia, leaving her confused about his change of intentions.

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4. As a means of testing if what the ghost states is a truth, Hamlet creates a play with similar circumstances to see how Claudius and Gertrude react. He feels their subsequent reactions show their guilt.
5. Due to mistaken identity, Hamlet kills Ophelia's father, Polonius, hiding behind a curtain, thinking he is Claudius. As a direct result, Laertes, Ophelia's brother, wants a duel to avenge his father's death by Hamlet. Claudius sends Hamlet out of the country to England, apparently as a means of avoiding trouble. However, Hamlet finds a letter asking that the current King of England execute him.
6. Ophelia is shown growing crazy over past events: Hamlet's rejection, her father's death.

She drowns, perhaps intentionally.

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7. Having escaped execution by an invading ship, Hamlet returns to Denmark. The famous graveyard scene unfolds with Hamlet pontificating over the skull of Yorick, his father's jester. *Hamlet moodily contemplates his own mortality* and discovers Ophelia died while he was away.

A duel is arranged between Hamlet and Laertes.

8. During the sword fight, Gertrude drinks from a poisoned cup intended for Hamlet by Claudius.
9. Enraged and in grief for the death of his mother, Hamlet kills Claudius with a poisoned blade intended to kill Hamlet.
10. Laertes, and then Hamlet also, dies from the poisoned blade.