**Ms. McLeod**

**ELA B30**

Hamlet

***-William Shakespeare-***

**Structure of the Shakespearean Play**

**Every one of Shakespeare’s plays contain five acts with the following plot structure:**

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| **Act One**  **Introduction**(Exposition)- The setting is introduced, important characters are introduced; key notes to characters are given; and the groundwork of the plot is played. |
| **Act Two**  **Growth**- The plot and the characters are further developed often revealing motives. New characters may be introduced (also called conflict). |
| **Act Three**  **Climax**-The turning point of the play where the hero is confronted with his guilt. If he does not repent, he goes on to the end and tragedy results. |
| **Act Four**  **Consequence**- The consequence of the decision in Act III is worked out. |
| **Act Five**  **Conclusion**- Where the plot works out to its ending, the tragic character gets his reward and harmony is restored by the destruction of the individual. |

**Style of the Shakespearean Play**

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| * The plays are written in blank verse (no set rhyme scheme). * Prose is used whenever the characters belong to a lower class of society. * Poetry is used chiefly for the purpose of giving emphasis to those lines in which the speaker expresses a purpose or decision and it frequently marks the closing of a scene. |

**Dramatic Devices in the Shakespearean Play**

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| **Conflict**  Clash of opposing forces without which there is no drama. It could be a clash of wills, a physical clash, a clash between man and himself. |
| **Crisis**  Turning points of the play. |
| **Coincidence**  The occurrence of events without apparent connection. |
| **Contrast**  Within character, between characters and atmosphere of the play. |
| **Parallelism**  The fact that characters and events in the earlier part of the play are balanced against those on the latter part. |
| **Principle of Alternation**  A humorous scene following a tragic scene. |
| **Nemesis**  Principle of retribution (get what you deserve). |
| **Foreshadowing of Events**  A warning of what may happen. |
| **Irony**  Ridicule, humour or light sarcasm which implies the opposite of the literal sense of the word. |
| **Dramatic Irony**  The effect produced when a speech of situation has one meaning for the actor or speaker and an inner or opposite for the audience. |
| **Pathos**  That which excites pity. |
| **Supernatural**  Agencies above or outside the forces of nature. |
| **Soliloquy**  Where a character is talking to himself or herself and disregards any other characters present (used in drama to disclose a character’s innermost thoughts). |

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***Hamlet has onstage action in…plenty. A ghost walks the stage; people are killed by stabbing and poisoning; a young woman runs mad, is drowned …and is buried…two skeletons are dug up and scattered over the stage; armies march and there is a fencing match that ends up in a general slaughter.***

–Edward Hubler-

Inspired by…

Shakespeare’s Hamlet corresponds to a legendary figure in Denmark’s history called Amleth. The legend was first written down in the 12th century. The story was retold and translated into English in the 16th century and became the inspiration for Shakespeare’s tragedy, Hamlet.

Tragedy…

Even though Hamlet contains much action it is not an action play but is a revenge tragedy. The characters in Hamlet are psychologically complex and are driven by anger, grief, love and despair. The nature of good vs. evil predominates in the play.

A tragedy is a type of drama that presents a heroic or noble character with conflicts that are difficult or impossible to resolve.

Hamlet is a revenge tragedy. The characteristics of a revenge tragedy are:

1. a hero, usually informed by a ghost of an injury or crime that needs to be revenged.
2. the hero accepting the challenge to revenge and beginning to plot it. The protagonist(hero) often pretends to be insane in order to enact his revenge.
3. the hero confronting the villain and overcoming obstacles standing in the way of revenge.
4. the revenge finally being achieved in a bloody and horrifying manner.

Setting…

The actors in the earliest performances of Hamlet dressed in the elaborate clothing of Shakespeare’s England. However, the play is actually set in northern Europe several hundred years before Shakespeare was born. Most of the action takes place in and around Elsinore, Denmark’s royal castle.

The Globe Theater…

The Globe was made of wood and was octagonal. Like other theatres of the time, it was open – air with the stage at its center. Poorer theater-goers paid a penny to stand around three sides of the stage, while wealthy audience members sat in one of the three stories of seats along the theater walls. Audiences of this period were diverse and included people from all levels of English society.

Theater and drama today are much different from what they were in Shakespeare’s time. Women were not allowed on stage, so acting troupes consisted entirely of men and boys. Because of their high voices, young boys often played the parts of female characters. The stage had very little scenery. The play’s setting was conveyed to the audience by words or actions of the actors. A nighttime setting, for example, might be signified by an actor carrying a torch on stage. Costumes, however, were anything but plain. They were elaborate. Sound effects, such as drum rolls and trumpet blasts, were also popular.