ELA B30

Ms. McLeod

Hamlet

Questions Act IV

1. Is Hamlet really mad in this play, or is merely pretending to be mad? (Find lines that support your answer)
2. A foil is a character who is like the protagonist in some respects but who has contrasting qualities that "reflect" or illuminate the traits of the main character. Who are Hamlet's foils, and in what ways do their characters shed light on his?
3. Do Hamlet and Fortinbras meet in IV.iv? Why is this significant?
4. Why is Ophelia mad? Does anything she says make sense? What happens to her at the end of Act IV? What does her madness and death symbolize about the kingdom?
5. Look at the scene with Laertes and Claudius (IV.vii). What plans do they have for Hamlet? How does this scene establish Laertes as a foil for Hamlet?
6. Why is Hamlet less present in this act than in the previous three?

Questions Act V

1. Why does this scene begin with two clowns trading jokes? Do their jokes make any sense in the context of the play?
2. Where do Hamlet and Laertes fight in V.ii?
3. Who is Osric, and why is he included in the play?
4. Does Hamlet realize that he might not come out of this fight alive? See V.ii.225-238.
5. When Gertrude drinks from the cup, Claudius asks her not to drink and she refuses. Has she ever disobeyed Claudius before?
6. Who is dead on stage as the play ends? Who is alive at the end of the play?
7. Why is Fortinbras' presence important?