Hamlet
Introduction and Act 1 Scene 1

Short Response:
What information do you gather from the full title of the play: The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark?

What information do you gather from the first six lines (four names) on the Dramatis Personae or Character List?

Describe Barnardo and Francisco’s tone in the first five lines. What words demonstrate their tone?

What is likely the “thing” that Horatio asks whether it has “appeared again tonight” (line 26)?

Reread lines 28–30. According to Marcellus, what does Horatio think of the Ghost?

What mood does Shakespeare create through Barnardo’s story? How does he accomplish this?
Critical Response: (10 points)

What choices does Shakespeare make about how to begin the play? How do these choices contribute to meaning and aesthetic impact?

Notes: Other words for "impact" are "effect," "outcome," or "influence." Authors can choose how to structure a text, for example, how and where to begin a story, or how to end it. They can also choose to give it a happy or a sad ending. Explain to students that aesthetic means "of or relating to the beautiful."
As we read, write an objective summary of the rest of Act 1 scene 1. Below take notes to help write your summary.
Assessed Standard(s)
RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
L.11-12.4.b, c Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., conceive, conception, conceivable). c. Consult general or specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.

Short Response:
In lines 87–90, who is Hamlet mourning?
What are the first two adjectives that the King uses to describe Hamlet's nature?

Evaluate Claudius’s sincerity about Hamlet’s “sweet and commendable” nature. What evidence from the text supports your position?

How does Claudius view the loss of Hamlet's father? Use evidence from the text to support your position.

What does Claudius mean by condolence on line 93?

Paraphrase lines 87—97. What is Claudius saying to Hamlet?
What does Claudius mean when he calls Hamlet’s grief “unmanly” in line 94?

Critical Response: (10 points)

How do specific word choices in Claudius’s monologue impact the development of Hamlet’s character? **Cite examples from the text.**

Act 1 Scene 2 continued…
What does Claudius ask Hamlet to do in lines 106–108 (“We pray you, throw to earth / This unprevailing woe”)?

What kind of relationship does Claudius attempt to establish with Hamlet in lines 108–118?

How does Claudius’s monologue set up a conflict between the characters of Hamlet and Claudius? **Cite textual evidence to support your response.**
Critical Response: (10 points)
How does this section develop your view of Hamlet? Cite at least two pieces of evidence from the text in support of your claim.

Hamlet
Act 1 Scene 2
Hamlet's first soliloquy

Short Response:

Paraphrase Hamlet's wish that “this too, too sullied flesh would melt / Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew”?

What reason does Hamlet give for not committing “self-slaughter”?
Describe Hamlet's tone in lines 130-135. Support your description with evidence from the text. How does Hamlet view the world in lines 137–141? Cite textual evidence to support your answer.

What do you learn about Hamlet's father in lines 138-139?

What does Hamlet's use of imagery in lines 143-145 imply about his mother's love for his father?

Which words does Hamlet use to describe the length of time between his father's death and his mother's marriage?

Describe Hamlet's tone toward his mother in this line(146). Cite specific evidence to support your response.

Explain the comparison Hamlet makes on lines 150–152 “O God, a beast that wants the discourse of reason / Would have mourned longer!” What is the impact of this comparison on Hamlet's tone?

Paraphrase the comparison Hamlet uses to describe Claudius in lines 152-154 (“My father’s brother but no more like my father,/Than I to Hercules”). What is the impact of using Hercules in this comparison?
Critical Response: (10 points)
How do specific word choices in Hamlet’s first soliloquy impact the development of the Queen’s character?
Hamlet
Act 1 Scene 3

Addressed Standard(s)
RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors).
W.11-12.2.a, b Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.

Short Response:

What does Laertes mean when he uses the phrase “Hamlet, and the trifling of his favor” (line 5)?

How does Laertes describe Hamlet’s affection in lines 7-12? How does Laertes tell Ophelia to react to the affection in these lines?

To what do the terms “the body” and “the head” refer on lines 23-24? What is the relationship between “the body” and “the head” in this context?

How are Hamlet’s choices different from the choices of “unvalued persons? Whom do Hamlet’s choices affect?

What is Laertes’s concern for Ophelia?

What metaphor for Hamlet’s pursuit of Ophelia does Laertes develop in his speech? What is the impact of the metaphor?
How does Ophelia respond to Laertes’s advice about chastity?

**Critical Response: (10pts)**
How does Shakespeare develop the characters of Laertes and Ophelia in relation to one another?
Hamlet
Act 1 Scene 5
Hamlet’s second soliloquy

RL.11-12.2 Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

Hamlet Central Ideas Tracking Tool: (Required)
The ideas of morality, revenge, and the tension between action and inaction are rich in this section of reading. Look for and annotate evidence related to the development of central ideas as you read and discuss the excerpt.

Critical Response: (10 pts)
How do specific word choices contribute to the development of two central ideas in Hamlet’s “O all you host of heaven!” soliloquy? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

Critical Response #2: (10 pts)
Choose one of the images Hamlet uses to describe himself in the “Now I am alone” soliloquy. How is this image related to the development of a central idea from another soliloquy?
Hamlet
Act 2 Scene 2
Hamlet’s third soliloquy

Addressed Standard(s)
RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
W.11-12.2.f Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

Short Response:

In the first lines of the passage, “about” is used to mean “around.” Why does Hamlet say “Fie upon ’t! Foh! About, my brains!”

Look at the explanatory notes to determine what cunning means in the line “cunning of the scene”. Why does Hamlet describe the scene as cunning?

Use the context of the speech to determine the meaning of malefactions. Paraphrase Hamlet’s reasoning.

What does Hamlet mean by, “For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak with most miraculous organ”? How does Shakespeare’s use of personification impact your understanding of these lines?

What is Hamlet planning to do?

Blench means “shrink; flinch; quail.” What does Hamlet mean by “if he do blench, I know my course”?
What lines of this soliloquy develop a central idea of revenge, also addressed in lines 99–102 of Act 1.5 (“shall I couple hell...”)?

**Critical Response: (10 pts)**
How does Hamlet’s decision to stage a play impact the action of the drama?
Mid-Unit Assessment
Hamlet’s first three soliloquies

Assessed Standard(s)
RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
W.11-12.2.a, b, f
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.
f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
L.11-12.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.11-12.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Essay Topic:
Select one of Hamlet’s first three soliloquies. In this soliloquy, how does Shakespeare develop Hamlet’s character in relation to other characters?

A High Performance Response should:
1. Cite evidence from the soliloquy to identify at least one aspect or quality of Hamlet’s character.
2. Identify specific examples of Hamlet’s relationship to at least one other character.
3. Explain how Hamlet’s relationships with other characters impact aspects or qualities of his character.

Text-Based Response

Your writing will be assessed using the Text Analysis Rubric.

Guidelines:
Be sure to:
● Closely read the prompt
● Address all elements of the prompt in your response
● Include a clear introduction and concluding statement
● Paraphrase, quote, and reference relevant evidence to support your claim
● Organize your ideas in a cohesive and coherent manner
Hamlet
Act 3 Scene 1
Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” Soliloquy

Assessed Standard(s)
RL.11-12.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)

Short Response:
How would you summarize the problem Hamlet describes in these first five lines?

With what issue is Hamlet struggling?

Critical Response: (10 pts)
Analyze Hamlet’s attitude toward life and death, noting Shakespeare’s specific use of metaphor and language that is fresh, engaging, and beautiful.

A High Performance Response should:
1. Identify Hamlet’s use of metaphor and language that is fresh, engaging, and beautiful.
2. Explain Hamlet’s varied use of negative imagery associated with life.
3. Recognize Hamlet’s contrasting views of life and the relative quiet of death.
4. Convey an understanding of Hamlet’s belief that the uncertainty surrounding death forces one to endure suffering in life.