

FREE PRINTABLE QUIZ

Hamlet

Act 1, Scene 5 — the Ghost's command

William Shakespeare · 20 questions with a full answer key and explanations

What's inside

- **20 multiple-choice questions**, including passage analysis with the original text printed above it — the way your English class asks it.
- **Answer key** on its own page so you can take the quiz first.
- **Explanations** for every question, so a wrong answer teaches you something.
- Written from LumLysia's study edition of the book — not scraped summaries.

Took Honors English for the GPA boost, only to get crushed by Shakespearean English? Read the entire book in clear modern English—without missing the tiny details that show up on class quizzes.

Try a book free and high quality quizzes including passage analysis like in your English class.

[Read Hamlet free at lumlysia.com](https://lumlysia.com)

Start reading free →

The first 15 pages of every book are free — no card needed.

The quiz

Hamlet — Act 1 · Scene 5. Answers begin on the answer key page.

PLOT & EVENT

1. According to the Ghost, how was Old Hamlet murdered?

- A. He was stabbed in his bed by Claudius.
- B. He was poisoned by 'hebenon' poured into his ear while sleeping.
- C. He was killed in battle defending Denmark's borders.
- D. He died of natural causes, but Claudius spread rumors of murder.

PLOT & EVENT

2. What is the immediate consequence of Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost regarding his companions, Horatio and Marcellus?

- A. He immediately sends them to confront Claudius with the news.
- B. He confides in them fully, seeking their advice on how to proceed.
- C. He makes them swear a solemn oath of secrecy and hints at feigning madness.
- D. He dismisses them, stating he needs to be alone to process the information.

CHARACTER

3. Which of the following best describes the Ghost's primary motivation in revealing the circumstances of his death to Hamlet?

- A. To warn Hamlet about the dangers of ambition and power.
- B. To seek vengeance against Claudius and ensure justice for his murder.
- C. To reconcile with Gertrude and forgive her hasty remarriage.
- D. To provide Hamlet with a philosophical understanding of the afterlife.

CHARACTER

4. Hamlet's immediate reaction to the Ghost's revelation about Claudius is characterized by:

- A. Skeptical doubt and a demand for further proof.
- B. Overwhelming grief for his mother's perceived betrayal.
- C. A fervent vow to erase all other thoughts and dedicate himself to revenge.
- D. Fear and a desire to flee Elsinore immediately.

MICRO-DETAIL

5. The Ghost describes the poison used to murder him as 'hebenon.' Into which part of his body was it poured?

- A. His mouth
- B. His eyes
- C. His ears
- D. A wound on his chest

MICRO-DETAIL

6. Where was Old Hamlet sleeping when Claudius murdered him?

- A. In his royal bedchamber
- B. In the castle's watchtower
- C. In his orchard
- D. By the River Lethe

MICRO-DETAIL

7. To what animal does the Ghost compare Hamlet's hair standing on end from horror?

- A. A lion's mane
- B. A porcupine's quills
- C. A cat's fur
- D. A dog's hackles

MICRO-DETAIL

8. What object does Hamlet use to record his vow after the Ghost departs?

- A. A parchment scroll
- B. A writing tablet
- C. A piece of slate
- D. His own hand

MICRO-DETAIL

9. When Hamlet insists that Horatio and Marcellus swear secrecy, he invokes which saint?

- A. Saint George
- B. Saint Michael
- C. Saint Patrick
- D. Saint Peter

ANALYTICAL

10. Hamlet's declaration, 'The time is out of joint. O cursed spite, That ever I was born to set it right,' primarily suggests:

- A. His immediate regret for having met the Ghost.
- B. His philosophical acceptance of fate and destiny.
- C. His profound sense of burden and the overwhelming nature of his task.
- D. His belief that the kingdom's political structure is inherently flawed.

ANALYTICAL

11. The Ghost's description of his purgatorial suffering ('Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night, And for the day confin'd to fast in fires') primarily serves to:

- A. Emphasize the theological beliefs prevalent in Denmark.
- B. Illustrate the severe consequences of dying without last rites and the urgency of his demand.
- C. Provide a detailed account of the afterlife for the audience.
- D. Suggest that the Ghost is an evil spirit attempting to mislead Hamlet.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

GHOST. I find thee apt; And duller shouldst thou be than the fat weed That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf, Wouldst thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear. 'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard, A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark Is by a forged process of my death Rankly abus'd; but know, thou noble youth, The serpent that did sting thy father's life Now wears his crown. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast, With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,— O wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen. O Hamlet, what a falling off was there, From me, whose love was of that dignity That it went hand in hand even with the vow I made to her in marriage; and to decline Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor To those of mine.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

12. The Ghost's comparison of Hamlet to 'the fat weed That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf' primarily functions as a:

- A. Gentle reminder of Hamlet's academic background.
- B. Metaphorical warning against inaction and complacency.
- C. Direct insult questioning Hamlet's intelligence.
- D. Symbolic reference to the passage of time and decay.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

13. In the lines 'The serpent that did sting thy father's life Now wears his crown,' the 'serpent' serves as a powerful symbol of:

- A. The natural cycle of life and death.
- B. Divine judgment and retribution.
- C. Deceit, betrayal, and original sin.
- D. The swiftness and stealth of the murder.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

14. The Ghost's lament about Gertrude's 'falling off' and her attraction to a 'wretch whose natural gifts were poor' reveals his tone to be primarily:

- A. Indifferent and detached.
- B. Philosophical and resigned.
- C. Bitter, possessive, and deeply wounded.
- D. Amused and condescending.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

HAMLET. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else? And shall I couple hell? O, fie! Hold, my heart; And you, my sinews, grow not instant old, But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee? Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat In this distracted globe. Remember thee? Yea, from the table of my memory I'll wipe away all trivial fond records, All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past, That youth and observation copied there; And thy commandment all alone shall live Within the book and volume of my brain, Unmix'd with baser matter. Yes, by heaven! O most pernicious woman! O villain, villain, smiling damned villain! My tables. Meet it is I set it down, That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain! At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

15. The series of exclamations and rhetorical questions at the beginning of Hamlet's soliloquy ('O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else? And shall I couple hell?') primarily conveys:

- A. A calm and rational assessment of his situation.
- B. His profound shock and emotional turmoil.
- C. A deliberate attempt to invoke supernatural aid.
- D. His confusion about the Ghost's true nature.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

16. When Hamlet vows, 'from the table of my memory I'll wipe away all trivial fond records... And thy commandment all alone shall live,' he is employing a metaphor that suggests:

- A. His intention to literally forget his past life.
- B. His commitment to prioritize revenge above all other thoughts and duties.
- C. His desire to become a scholar focused solely on history.
- D. His belief that memory is an unreliable faculty.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

17. The repetition and alliteration in 'O villain, villain, smiling damned villain!' serve to emphasize Hamlet's:

- A. Intellectual understanding of Claudius's motives.
- B. Deep-seated rage and moral outrage at Claudius's hypocrisy.
- C. Sarcastic dismissal of the Ghost's claims.
- D. Fear of Claudius's physical power.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

HAMLET. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome. There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy. But come, Here, as before, never, so help you mercy, How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,— As I perchance hereafter shall think meet To put an antic disposition on— That you, at such times seeing me, never shall, With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake, Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase, As 'Well, we know', or 'We could and if we would', Or 'If we list to speak'; or 'There be and if they might', Or such ambiguous giving out, to note That you know aught of me:—this not to do. So grace and mercy at your most need help you, Swear.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

18. Hamlet's statement, 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy,' functions primarily as a:

- A. Rejection of Horatio's loyalty.
- B. Critique of purely rational or empirical thought in the face of the supernatural.
- C. Simple observation about the vastness of the universe.
- D. Sarcastic remark about Horatio's lack of imagination.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

19. The phrase 'To put an antic disposition on' is a crucial element of Hamlet's developing strategy, indicating his intention to:

- A. Adopt a disguise to infiltrate Claudius's inner circle.
- B. Feign madness to conceal his true motives and allow him to investigate.
- C. Withdraw from court life and pursue a monastic existence.
- D. Publicly denounce Claudius as a murderer.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

20. The detailed list of gestures and 'doubtful phrases' that Hamlet forbids Horatio and Marcellus from using ('With arms encumber'd thus, or this head-shake,' etc.) primarily highlights Hamlet's:

- A. Obsessive attention to minor details.
- B. Deep concern for maintaining the secrecy of his plan.
- C. Belief in the power of non-verbal communication.
- D. Desire to control his friends' every action.

Answer key

Check your answers here, then read the explanations on the next page.

1. B	2. C	3. B	4. C	5. C
6. C	7. B	8. B	9. C	10. C
11. B	12. B	13. C	14. C	15. B
16. B	17. B	18. B	19. B	20. B

Scored it? The same quizzes are built into the LumLysia reader, chapter by chapter, with instant feedback and a practice or test mode.

Answers explained

Why the right answer is right — and what the question is really testing.

1. B. He was poisoned by 'hebenon' poured into his ear while sleeping.

The Ghost explicitly states that Claudius 'With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial, And in the porches of my ears did pour The leperous distilment.'

2. C. He makes them swear a solemn oath of secrecy and hints at feigning madness.

Hamlet repeatedly makes Horatio and Marcellus swear on his sword not to reveal what they've seen or heard, and he warns them he 'shall think meet To put an antic disposition on.'

3. B. To seek vengeance against Claudius and ensure justice for his murder.

The Ghost explicitly commands Hamlet to 'Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder,' indicating his primary motivation is retribution for Claudius's crime.

4. C. A fervent vow to erase all other thoughts and dedicate himself to revenge.

Hamlet declares, 'from the table of my memory I'll wipe away all trivial fond records... And thy commandment all alone shall live,' demonstrating his immediate and intense commitment to the Ghost's charge.

5. C. His ears

The Ghost states, 'And in the porches of my ears did pour The leperous distilment,' clearly indicating the method of poisoning.

6. C. In his orchard

The Ghost recounts, 'Sleeping within my orchard, My custom always of the afternoon, Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole.'

7. B. A porcupine's quills

The Ghost says, 'And each particular hair to stand on end Like quills upon the fretful porpentine.'

8. B. A writing tablet

Hamlet exclaims, 'My tables. Meet it is I set it down,' and the stage direction confirms '[Writing].'

9. C. Saint Patrick

Hamlet says, 'Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio, And much offence too.'

10. C. His profound sense of burden and the overwhelming nature of his task.

This line encapsulates Hamlet's feeling of being reluctantly thrust into a monumental and morally complex task, highlighting his internal conflict and the weight of his new responsibility.

11. B. Illustrate the severe consequences of dying without last rites and the urgency of his demand.

The Ghost's suffering underscores the injustice of his sudden death without confession or absolution, intensifying the moral imperative for Hamlet to act and avenge him.

12. B. Metaphorical warning against inaction and complacency.

The Ghost uses this vivid metaphor to spur Hamlet to action, implying that only extreme dullness or apathy would prevent him from seeking revenge after hearing the truth.

13. C. Deceit, betrayal, and original sin.

The serpent is a classic biblical symbol of temptation, deceit, and evil, directly linking Claudius's act to profound moral corruption and betrayal.

14. C. Bitter, possessive, and deeply wounded.

The language 'incestuous, adulterate beast,' 'shameful lust,' and 'falling off' conveys a strong sense of personal betrayal, wounded pride, and a possessive judgment of Gertrude's choices.

15. B. His profound shock and emotional turmoil.

The fragmented syntax, exclamations, and rapid shifts in address ('heaven,' 'earth,' 'hell') vividly portray Hamlet's overwhelmed and disoriented emotional state after the Ghost's revelation.

16. B. His commitment to prioritize revenge above all other thoughts and duties.

The 'table of memory' as a writing surface from which he will erase everything but the Ghost's command powerfully illustrates his dedication to making revenge his sole purpose and overriding thought.

17. B. Deep-seated rage and moral outrage at Claudius's hypocrisy.

The emphatic repetition and harsh 'v' sounds underscore Hamlet's intense emotional revulsion and moral condemnation of Claudius, particularly the deceptive nature of his 'smiling' villainy.

18. B. Critique of purely rational or empirical thought in the face of the supernatural.

This line challenges Horatio's scholarly, rational worldview, suggesting that the supernatural events they've witnessed transcend human reason and conventional understanding, thus justifying Hamlet's own extreme reaction.

19. B. Feign madness to conceal his true motives and allow him to investigate.

Hamlet explicitly states his intention to 'put an antic disposition on,' meaning to act mad, which will serve as a cover for his investigations and allow him to observe Claudius without suspicion.

20. B. Deep concern for maintaining the secrecy of his plan.

Hamlet's specific instructions about avoiding subtle cues demonstrate his acute awareness of how easily suspicion can be aroused and his meticulous effort to ensure his feigned madness is convincing and his secret is kept.

Keep going — the whole book, in modern English

Took Honors English for the GPA boost, only to get crushed by Shakespearean English? Read the entire book in clear modern English—without missing the tiny details that show up on class quizzes.

Try a book free and high quality quizzes including passage analysis like in your English class.

[Read Hamlet free at lumlysia.com](https://lumlysia.com)

What a LumLysia membership includes

- The complete text side by side with a clear modern translation — or modern only, your choice.
- Literary lens annotations already done for you (feminist, psychoanalytic, historical, formalist, reader-response).
- Chapter recaps and timelines so you never lose the thread.
- Quizzes for every chapter, including passage analysis, with practice and test modes.
- Quote finder, essay helper and a chat tutor that only talks about your book.

Free: the first 15 pages of every book — no card needed.

\$9.99 / month — every book, every tool, cancel anytime.

\$24.99 / semester (4 months) — the cheaper way if your class runs all term. Students with a school email get 20% off the semester pass.

Try a book free →

[Browse every book in the library · lumlysia.com](https://lumlysia.com)

Share this PDF with your class — it's free.