

Worksheet 1 – Introduction

Recall

Answer these questions after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember.

1. The Tragedy of Hamlet is often thought of being that of a man who...?
 - a) Doesn't want to do as he is told
 - b) Can't make up his mind
 - c) Loves too much
 - d) Is incapable of love

2. The Tragedy of Hamlet was first performed in what year?
 - a) 1603
 - b) 1595
 - c) 1600
 - d) 1606

3. The original story of Hamlet was taken from historical text?
 - a) Holinshed Chronicles
 - b) Daemonologie
 - c) The Leviathan
 - d) Saxo Grammaticus

4. What was the name of Shakespeare's son who dies shortly before he started writing Hamlet?
 - a) Joseph
 - b) Nicholas
 - c) Hamnet
 - d) Amleth

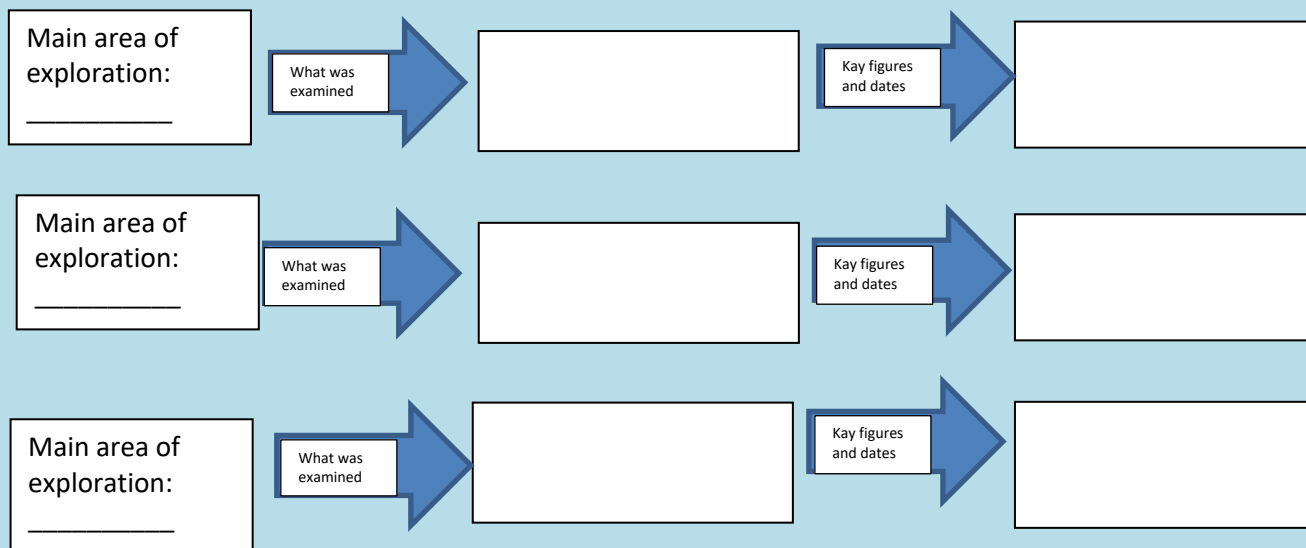
Bonus point: What were the other names of Shakespeare's children and their dates of birth and death?

5. What relationship does Hamlet look at most closely?
 - a) Mothers and daughters
 - b) Fathers and sons
 - c) The King and his subjects
 - d) Soldiers and their King

Analysis

6. In the lecture, Dr John McRae explores the structure of five acts that is imposed upon the plays that Shakespeare wrote. He states that this structure was imposed by Nicholas Rowe in the 1720s to bring order to the previous chaos of the Renaissance period.

Listen again to the section between 7.14 and 11.50 and make a flow diagram of the key areas of knowledge that were explored during the Renaissance and the key figures involved. Adding in dates would be useful as well in order to get a really secure picture of the world that Shakespeare was part of and reacted to.



Evaluation

7. Dr John McRae states that the people of the 1590s loved a Revenge Tragedy and calls revenge the 'noble code of honour'. This is a really important concept and genre to understand in order to deepen your understanding of this play and to see where Shakespeare has adhered to these and where he deviates.

Look up what a Revenge Tragedy is and what key features it needs to possess. List those here.

REVENGE TRAGEDY FEATURES:

Challenge: Research the elements that were present in an Ancient Greek Tragedy and list them here.

ANCIENT GREEK TRAGEDY FEATURES:

How do the elements of the Revenge Tragedy differ from the Greek Tragedy? What do you think these changes make to a play?

Glossary

- **Scholar** – A specialist in a particular field of study. Someone highly educated.
e.g. Dr John McRae is a scholar of Shakespearean plays.
- **tragedy** – an event causing great suffering, destruction and distress. In Literature, it is play that deals with tragic events leading to death and the fall of the main character.
e.g. A tragedy that killed 95 people or The Tragedy of Hamlet.
- **imposed** – to force an unwelcome decision upon someone.
e.g. The decision was not imposed upon them.
- **exploration** – a thorough examination
e.g. The exploration of space has led to a great deal of new knowledge.
- **soliloquy** – the act of speaking one's thoughts aloud when by oneself, especially by a character in a play.
e.g. Edmund starts and ends the play with a soliloquy.
- **meditation**– a written or spoken argument expressing considered thoughts on a subject.
e.g. This is not a meditation on manhood, just my own immediate ideas.
- **Renaissance** – a period of time between the 14th and 17th centuries where European cultural, artistic, political and economic concepts were “reborn” following the Middle Ages. There was a flurry of new explorations and discoveries in knowledge about the way that the world worked.
e.g. Leonardo DaVinci was a figurehead of the Renaissance.
- **Humanism** – a system of thought that attaches importance to human beings rather than divine or supernatural beings.
e.g. Humanism is an increasingly well-supported philosophy in modern times.
- **Reformation** – a 16th century movement that reformed the Catholic church and created the Reformed and Protestant Churches.
e.g. The Reformation is often attributed to Henry VIII but historians have argued against this rather simple explanation.