

## Northern Broadsides



Education Resource Pack



## About this pack

We hope that students from Primary to Advanced Level will enjoy our production and use this education resource pack.

It may be used in advance of seeing the performance – to prepare and inform students about the play; and afterwards – to respond to the play and explore in more depth. Teachers may select, from the broad range of material, which is most suitable for their students.

The first section of this document is a detailed companion to our production: plot and character synopsis, interviews. It reveals the ways in which our company met with the many challenges of bringing Hamlet to the stage.

The second section seeks to explore the context of the play in greater depth.

The third section includes games, exercises and suggestions for study.



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## The play's the thing...



**FRANCISCO** A Sentinel. *We meet him in the first scene – and never see him again.*

**BARNARDO & MARCELLUS** Two Sentinels. *They've seen a ghost on the battlements and think they should probably tell someone.*

**HORATIO** A scholar and friend of Prince Hamlet. *Brought to the battlements by Marcellus to see the ghost.*

**GHOST** Spirit of the late King Hamlet. *Got a lot to say for himself for a dead guy!*

**HAMLET** Young Prince of Denmark --- grief stricken at the death of his father, and the hasty marriage of his mother and his uncle Claudius. *Thinks too much!*

**KING Claudius** The brother of dead King Hamlet – now the new king, and married to Gertrude. *Just a bit too smooth...*

**QUEEN Gertrude** Recent widow of King Hamlet --- *she's been very quick to marry his brother, Claudius!*

**CORNELIA & VOLTEMAND** Ambassadors -- sent off at the start of the play to see the King of Norway about his upstart Niece, Young Fortinbras\*. *You need to pay attention to this, as it is plot!*

**POLONIUS** The king's councillor. *Once a keen politician, now having one too many 'senior moments'.*

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\*In our production Young Fortinbras is played by a woman

<b>LAERTES</b>	Polonius' son. <i>Goes off to France at the start of the play, but you know he'll be back!</i>
<b>OPHELIA</b>	Polonius' daughter --- <i>and Prince Hamlet's girlfriend, but not for long!</i>
<b>ROSENCRANTZ &amp; GUILDENSTERN</b>	Old school friends of Prince Hamlet's. <i>Spies!</i>
<b>OSRIC</b>	A courtier. <i>Vain, officious, political – a Polonius wannabe.</i>
<b>GRAVEDIGGER</b>	A gravedigger. <i>A clown!</i>
<b>THE PLAYERS</b>	A troupe of traveling players. <i>The Actor-manager of this troupe is a favourite of Prince Hamlet's.</i>
<b>FORTINBRAS</b>	Niece to the King of Norway. <i>Ambitiously leading military campaigns in Poland – but she's got her eye on Denmark. Watch this space!</i>
<b>CAPTAIN; SAILORS; MESSENGERS; GRAVEDIGGER 2:</b>	<i>Small, but vital roles that serve the plot, deliver messages, and set up the gags.</i>

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## The Plot...

### Act 1

- Scene 1      **The battlements – night**
  - *Sentinel Barnardo takes over the guard from Francisco.*
  - *Marcellus arrives with Horatio, who will bear witness to an apparition which has appeared on two nights previously. As they speak a Ghost appears that looks very like the dead King. They agree that they must tell the Young Prince Hamlet.*

- Scene 2      **A room in the castle – the next day**
  - *The court celebrates the marriage of King Claudius and Queen Gertrude. Ambassadors are sent off on a diplomatic mission to Norway, concerning the actions of Young Fortinbras; and Polonius' son, Laertes, is given leave to return to France. Everyone is happy except young Prince Hamlet -- still grieving for his father, and disgusted by the marriage of his mother to Uncle Claudius.*
  - *Horatio, Barnardo and Marcellus find Hamlet alone and tell him about the Ghost. He agrees to watch with them that night.*
- Scene 3      **The harbour – later that day**
  - *Laertes prepares to set sail for France, but before he goes he has advice for his sister, Ophelia, about her relationship with Hamlet. He warns her that Hamlet's affections will not last and that she mustn't risk losing her virtuous reputation. Polonius arrives with parting advice for his son. Once Laertes has gone Polonius questions Ophelia about Hamlet. He forbids her to see him, or respond to his love letters. Ophelia promises to obey her father.*
- Scene 4      **The battlements – that night**
  - *Hamlet arrives to keep watch with Horatio and Marcellus. The revels of King Claudius can be heard – cannon and trumpets. The ghost appears, beckoning to Hamlet. Horatio and Marcellus try to stop him, but Hamlet follows.*
- Scene 5      **The shore – same night**



*Hamlet has followed the Ghost to a secluded spot and begs it to speak to him. The Ghost tells Hamlet that he was murdered by Claudius and demands that his son avenge his death. Dawn breaks and the Ghost departs. Hamlet vows to fulfil his father's command and when Horatio and Marcellus arrive on the scene he swears them to secrecy. He tells them that he will now 'put on an antic disposition'.*

## Act 2

- Scene 1      **A room in the castle -- day**
  - *Polonius instructs a spy to follow his son, Laertes, to France to find out what kind of life he is living there. Ophelia enters, badly shaken. Hamlet has come into her room half dressed, and behaved in a strange and distracted way. Polonius concludes that it is because she has rejected Hamlet's love and it has made him mad. The King must be told.*

- Scene 2      **A room in the castle – day**

- *The King and Queen enter with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Clearly Hamlet's 'mad' behaviour has not just been towards Ophelia. The King has sent for Hamlet's old school friends, in order that they may spy on him and find out the cause of his 'transformation'.*
- *The ambassadors return with assurances from the Norwegian King that he has curbed Young Fortinbras' aggression towards Denmark, and directed hostilities towards Poland – begging safe passage through Denmark on this campaign.*
- *Polonius presents his theory of Hamlet's madness and they hatch a plan to spy on Hamlet and Ophelia.*
- *Hamlet appears, reading a book, and the King and Queen withdraw while Polonius speaks to him. Hamlet's behaviour is strange and mischievous and Polonius leaves as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern arrive. Hamlet is delighted to see his old friends, but almost immediately becomes suspicious of their motives.*
- *Polonius announces the arrival of a troupe of traveling players – much to Hamlet's delight. When they arrive, he asks them to prepare a particular play, with an extra speech added. It occurs to Hamlet that if the players perform a play that shows a murder very like the one described by the Ghost – Claudius' reaction will reveal his guilt.*



### Act 3

- Scene 1      **A room in the castle – day**

- *The King and Queen question Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who have not yet managed to find out what is wrong with Hamlet. They're pleased to hear of the arrival of the players, as this may be a good distraction for Hamlet. Polonius is still convinced that the cause of his madness is unrequited love. He sets Ophelia as a trap for Hamlet and persuades the King to spy on the encounter with him*
- *Hamlet enters to find Ophelia reading alone. In their initial exchange there is a sense of what has been between them in the past – then Hamlet realises that they are being watched. He becomes very angry and Ophelia is left, once again, frightened and broken hearted. Claudius is not convinced that love is the cause of Hamlet's madness, and decides that he should be sent away – to England.*



- Scene 2      **A room in the castle – evening**
  - *The Players prepare to perform their play. Hamlet discusses his plan with Horatio – who has now been told of the murder. Horatio promises to watch Claudius’ reaction to the play.*
  - *The audience assembles for the play, including the King and Queen. Hamlet sits intimately with Ophelia – which confuses her still further. The play is performed – and when the moment of the murder occurs, Claudius rises to his feet and leaves the room. Hamlet is triumphant and shares his thoughts with Horatio.*
- Scene 3      **A room in the castle – night**
  - *The King is now very afraid of Hamlet, and commissions Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to accompany the prince to England immediately. Polonius arrives with news that Hamlet is summoned to the Queen’s closet, and that he will hide behind the arras to overhear their conference.*
  - *Alone, Claudius’ guilt overwhelms him and he kneels to pray for forgiveness. Hamlet sees his uncle, and the opportunity for revenge. However, if Claudius is killed while he is at prayer, his soul will go to heaven; whereas Hamlet’s father was killed sleeping, with all his sins unconfessed. Hamlet resolves to kill Claudius at a moment when he is sure to go to hell. He doesn’t know that Claudius has not been able to pray after all.*
- Scene 4      **The Queen’s closet – night**
  - *Polonius enters the Queen’s closet and conceals himself behind the arras to spy. Hamlet arrives and challenges his mother in such an aggressive manner that she calls for help. Polonius responds, still concealed, and Hamlet kills him, unseen. Despite this desperate act, Hamlet won’t be swayed from his assault on Gertrude. He continues to accuse her, until suddenly the Ghost appears in the room. The Queen cannot see it, but Hamlet is chided by the Ghost for not having yet revenged him. After begging his mother not to return to Claudius’ bed that night, Hamlet exits dragging the body of Polonius away.*

#### Act 4

- Scene 1      **The Queen’s closet – continuous from previous scene**



*Claudius questions Gertrude about Hamlet, and she affirms that he is mad. Upon hearing of the death of Polonius, Claudius sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern in search of the body – and the mad Prince.*



- Scene 2      **The castle – day**
  - *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern catch up with Hamlet, who won't tell them where he has hidden Polonius' body. Hamlet consents to be taken to the King.*
- Scene 3      **The castle – continuous**
  - *Hamlet is brought before Claudius. It's a stand off, but Hamlet has no choice – he must go away to England.*
  - *When Hamlet has gone Claudius reveals that sealed letters will also be carried to England, with instructions to execute Hamlet on his arrival.*
- Scene 4      **Outside the castle walls -- day**
  - *The army of Young Fortinbras is passing through Denmark, en route to Poland. Hamlet, escorted by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, stops to speak to a Captain and is struck by the willingness of men to die with little cause. As Hamlet leaves for England he is more resolved to his violent path.*
- Scene 5      **A room in the castle**



*Ophelia has sunk into genuine madness. She sings of lost love, and her dead father. Gertrude is shocked, and Claudius orders that Ophelia be watched.*

*A messenger arrives with news that Laertes is returned from France and, full of vengeful anger at the death of his father, is rousing up the people against the King.*

- *Laertes arrives and Claudius begins to calm him.*
- *Ophelia returns, handing out wild flowers – and Laertes' grief and rage increases. Claudius promises him that he shall be satisfied.*
- Scene 6      **The castle**
  - *Horatio receives letters from Hamlet. He has escaped from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern while at sea, on a pirate ship, and is back in Denmark.*
- Scene 7      **The castle**
  - *Claudius receives word of Hamlet's return, and plots with Laertes to kill him. Claudius suggests a fencing match in which Laertes will use a pointed sword. Laertes further suggests that he anoint the tip with poison. Claudius then adds that he will poison Hamlet's cup also.*
  - *The queen enters with the tragic news of Ophelia's death. She has fallen in the brook and drowned. Laertes is overcome with grief.*

## Act 5

- Scene 1      **A graveyard**

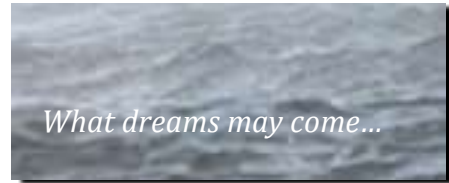
- *Hamlet returns, with Horatio, to find a Gravedigger preparing a low-key grave. Among the skulls uncovered is that of the old court jester, Yorick. Hamlet contemplates Yorick's skull – but he and Horatio quickly hide when a funeral party arrives.*
- *It is the burial of Ophelia – without ceremony, as her death was a possible suicide. When Hamlet reveals himself, Laertes attacks him – but Hamlet tells him there's nothing he can do for Ophelia now.*

- Scene 2      **The castle**

- *Hamlet fills Horatio in on the details of his voyage and escape. He discovered the content of the letters sent by Claudius, and altered them. Upon his escape at sea, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern continued for England, unknowingly bearing instructions for their own executions.*
- *Osric arrives to tell Hamlet that the King has made a bet on him defeating Laertes in a sword fight. Horatio is concerned, but Hamlet is resigned to Fate.*
- *The sword with the poisoned tip has been prepared, and the fight commences. Claudius places a poisoned pearl in a chalice for Hamlet to drink. In the fight, Laertes wounds Hamlet and in the scuffle they change rapiers. Gertrude takes up the poisoned cup to drink to Hamlet and Laertes is wounded by the poisoned sword. The Queen falls and dies. Dying Laertes confesses the King is to blame.*
- *Hamlet wounds the King, and forces him to drink the last poison from the cup.*
- *Hamlet makes Horatio promise to tell his story faithfully, and dies in the arms of his friend.*
- *Young Fortinbras arrives to take control of Denmark and a new regime begins.*



## Our Production



There are many ways of approaching a play like Hamlet. Every production makes different choices around the casting of the actors, the setting and costumes, and even the text itself. Hamlet is a VERY long play and most directors make cuts to the text prior to starting rehearsals.

Hamlet is a vast philosophical work with many rich and rounded characters, but it also presents a number of practical challenges. There's a sword fight, a dumb show and, most difficult of all – a ghost. This section examines how director Conrad Nelson and the company set about the demanding process of bringing this great play to an audience.

### THE COMPANY



Back row, left to right:

*Phil Corbitt, Fine Time Fontayne, Tom Kanji, Richard Evans, Nick Shaw, Andy Cryer, Conrad Nelson*

Middle row, left to right:

*Becky Hindley, Andrew Price, Lis Evans, Guy Lewis, Alex Gilbert, Lee Threadgold*

Front row, left to right:

*Kay Burnett, David Colvin, Natalie Dew, Richard Colvin, Katie Bevan*

**photo: Nobby Clark**

## Interviews



Conrad Nelson – Director

▪ ***Uncovering the play***

*Thursday 10th February – week 3 of rehearsals*

The beginning for me is always the text.

Hamlet has so much history – it seems to be buried under layers of past productions, famous performances, and received ideas on what the play is actually about.

For me there is no ‘theory’ of Hamlet or a ‘concept’ to put on it – there is simply the text. I’ve done a lot of preparation in advance of rehearsals, reading and re-reading the play; talking to the creative team; and of course, casting.

***Nevertheless, none of us really know the play until we say it out loud.***

Speaking the text is totally different from reading it, and what we’re finding in rehearsals is that the play is being uncovered. It’s a process of archaeology – digging down through the layers to find the jewels that are there for the taking. It’s all there. We don’t need to add anything.

We’re finding too, as we start to run the play scene by scene, how organically each scene grows out of the previous one – and you start to hear the echoes across the play and the web gets more and more complete. It’s exciting. You peel away the play and you want to share what you’ve found.

***I spent a long time finding the right actor to play the man himself.***

I was looking for a strong young actor, with dexterity and vulnerability – someone open, who was willing to journey with me to find out who Hamlet is.

I feel sure that Hamlet’s condition is one of a younger man. He’s a scholar, still in learning – and his grief at the start of the play is a young man’s grief. And it really doesn’t seem quite right to me for an older man to be obsessing so much about his mother! It also means that journey from youth to maturity is more acute.

Ophelia is always cast as a very young woman, and I think that story is so much more touching if she and Hamlet are of an age. They’re young; they have hope – and it all goes wrong for them.

Finally, casting Hamlet as a younger man has a knock on effect for the rest of the casting. Gertrude and Claudius are younger – with life to live. There's more at stake. There could even be a son to that marriage...

I had lots of practical considerations too. As always, there are more parts in the play than we can afford actors to play them. This inevitably means I need to create lines of parts for actors to double.

Often the Ghost is doubled with Claudius, but I think that this is potentially confusing. It makes more sense to me to double the Ghost with the Player King. Their fates are parallel and, as we hear the same voice during the play-within-the-play, we get an insight into the mind of Hamlet – remembering his father.

***Claudius – faced with his crime, and hears the voice of his dead brother.***

One of the things I've done is create a through line for Osric – an odd little character that appears towards the end of the play, almost as a spot of light relief. I've introduced Osric much earlier, by giving him the lines of Reynaldo in Act 2, scene 1. This makes him a kind of trainee for Polonius. Then, once Polonius is dead, he is seen to take on his role at court. It made good dramatic sense, solved a practical casting problem and created a nice little part for a member of our company.

You'll certainly notice that I've cast a woman to play Young Fortinbras. This decision was both practical and political. I wanted a woman to play the Player Queen. I feel that in an age where women are permitted on the stage and are playing Gertrude and Ophelia, it seems anachronistic to then have a man playing the Player Queen; and we are not using an Elizabethan setting.

***I have chosen to loosely set the piece around 1949 – a post war period of great social change, but before the advent of mass communication.***



I wanted a third woman in the company but I needed her to cover more parts to earn her place. It seemed appropriate, give our 20<sup>th</sup> Century setting that the new dawn at the end of our play is led by a woman.

***Young Fortinbras as a man is just more of the same for the world of Elsinore; as a woman she brings the potential of sweeping change.***

Northern Broadsides productions always have a strong musical identity, and this is no exception. The distinctive, velvety big band sound and close harmonies of our 1940s setting provide inspiration for the music of the court. But outside, where older, elemental forces are at work, we draw on the work of Shakespeare's contemporary, Danish composer Mogens Pedersøn, and early liturgical works.

***Underscoring the Ghost's speech, the company sings Libera me Domine de morte aeterna – which means deliver me, O Lord from eternal death.***

I love the bagpipes and had an idea that I wanted their unique, stirring sound for the battlements. So I was delighted to find actor-musician David Colvin – a wonderful piper; and even more delighted to discover that he had an equally gifted identical –twin brother, Richard.

***In the play Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are often mixed up – in our production, it's easy to see why.***



Finally – a word about cuts! Hamlet is a very long play, and does benefit from carefully trimming. In cutting I've had my eye on the best way to tell the story, looking for the rolling pace of the play. I try to hear the music of the language. It's about a bloke called Hamlet – but it's not just about him. I wanted to make sure that the audience engage with everyone's story – particularly that of Ophelia.

***It's important to maintain the balance of the piece.***

It's a privilege and a delight to act or direct Shakespeare. His use of language is so sensual. You taste it when you say it; like food, it's full and flavoursome. With beautiful poeticism, Hamlet is a play that is so well observed, and strangely naturalistic and honest about the human condition.



Nick Shaw

▪ ***Being Hamlet***

*Wednesday 2nd February – week 2 of rehearsals*

It's a real test – but such a fulfilling experience: what you want to be doing as an actor. I knew it would be great to play Hamlet, but it's better than I expected.



You do the research – there's so much written about it, and so many ways of doing it – and you feel the weight of it all. But now I feel the pressure's off. You've just got to trust coming at it from your own point of view. Con's approach isn't about concepts, or being too intellectual – it's about telling the story.

I'm getting more into the character of Hamlet as I go. I thought there might be parts I would find difficult to access. The rage, I know; and his awareness of mortality is something I can identify with. But the quick, witty, artful side of him, I thought I might find more difficult, but that's coming and you just have to work really hard in terms of the speed of thought.

***Basically, he's a young guy with a lot on his plate.***

He finds himself with the responsibility of being the arm of justice in the world. It feels like his relationship with Ophelia was a real solace to him; but just now he's got this thing to do – it's all consuming. In their one scene together you should see what could have been – but then he realises they're being watched and she's tainted by the poison of the king.

After he kills Polonius and is sent away, he has this brush with death. He reads the letter that's being carried by Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and realises that he's going to his death; but he escapes.

***He senses Fate taking a hand.***

When Hamlet returns to Denmark and sees what's happened to Ophelia, he tries to connect Laertes to his new found perspective. I think this sets the seed in Laertes' mind that what he and Claudius have planned isn't right – but by then he is already the puppet of the king.

I don't feel that Hamlet is an archetypal Tragic Hero. You can't put him in a box like that – he's so much more human: visiting different stages of human experience. He's accessible. Perhaps he has too much consciousness, but he's so lucid. He sees everyone for what they are; questions everything; takes nothing at face value.

***It's all about mortality...***

***Why we're here –***

***And coming to a state of acceptance and peace.***





Lis Evans - Designer

• ***Road to Elsinore***

*Monday 7th February – week 3 of rehearsals*

Director Conrad Nelson and I talked a lot about the environment we wanted to create for the play – something free flowing and dynamic.

Always the greatest challenge in designing for Northern Broadsides is to come up with something that works equally well in all the very different spaces the company has to play on tour. This production begins in the round, but soon we're in proscenium arch; thrust; traverse – and many different sizes of venue too.

What came out of our discussions was an angular set on more than one level, with steel lines to give height in the round and provide a back scenic element in pros.

The play makes lots of specific demands – such as a grave. We don't have a trap everywhere we go, so we had to build a grave-trap into the set. In fact there are two grave traps in our set, as the strongest position to put it for the round is the weakest for pros.

Another key requirement of any Hamlet design is a 'hiding place' for Polonius and Claudius. This isn't easy in the round; it can't be anything chunky like a screen. It needs to be something that implies a barrier, without actually being one for the audience. I felt that the usual kind of mesh fabric was too conventional and too much like a curtain. I wanted something more abstract. I'm still researching fabrics, but I've found one I really like --- a kind of random loose tangle of rough fibres. It's very sculptural and will double as the banners on the battlements.



When Conrad said he'd like to have water in the set, I initially thought this was a challenge too far. But it has so many uses throughout the play that it's worth the hassle. We're using a shallow fibreglass pool that shouldn't be too unmanageable on tour.

Midway through our design discussions, Conrad hit on a very specific period for the production – 1949. This actually brought the whole design together, as scenically we'd already come upon it with an angular 40s deco feel. The colour scheme I'd been using for the set was right too – blacks, greys, golds and yellows; and the late addition of a piano slotted right in as a stylized grand.

The costumes are all of the period, and there are specific requirements for this production and this play. The men will be in suits, obviously – but it's the women's clothes that really evoke the period.

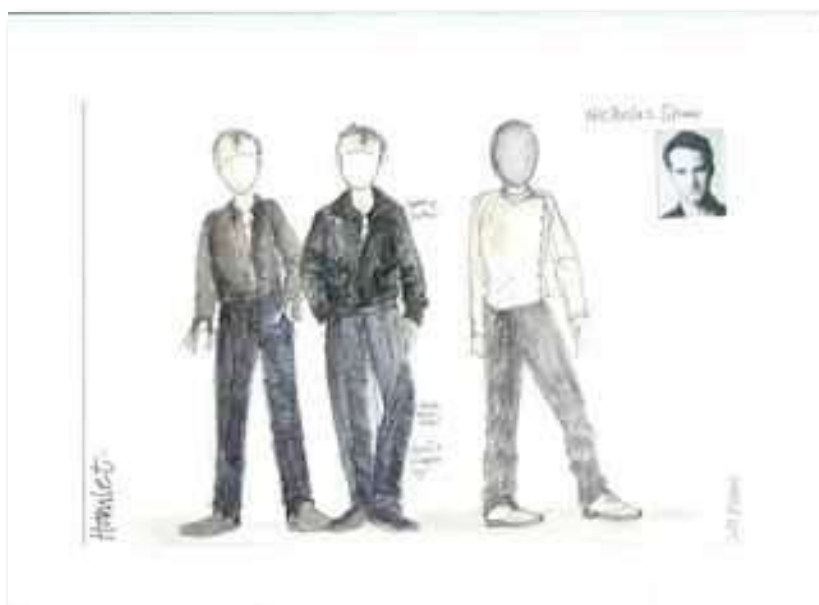
***Some of the actors are playing multiple roles and they need costume changes, or layers that can be put on quickly if necessary.***

I have to admit to being slightly obsessed with the blackness of Hamlet's trousers. There are so many references to his clothes being this inky black. I think I've got it right this time – and he's in a black leather jacket too.

***The courtiers are formal, but Hamlet is more of a rebel -- and definitely no tie!***

The creation of the Ghost is the first great challenge of this play and for us this is an ongoing conversation between myself and our puppet master, Lee Threadgold. Lee brings his skills to the process, but it's still has to look like part of the design. I didn't really want a big white spooky ghost, but the set is dark and the actors will be in black to manipulate the puppet. Lighting will be key, and we'll be using some kind of fabric. Lee and I are still collaborating on which fabric to use.

The puppet manipulators at the beginning will be made 'faceless' by the use of fencing masks. This gives the design a pleasing symmetry, as the climax of the play is a fencing match.





- ***Dead man – walking***

Puppet Master Lee Threadgold on  
creating the Ghost

*Thursday 10th February – week 3 of rehearsals*

Conrad and I actually spoke about this for the first time nearly two years ago, when we discussed lots of possibilities for how the ghost might manifest itself. Some of the ideas were quite literal, others more abstract. They ranged in scale from tiny figures to a gigantic face, which would almost devour Hamlet as it spoke.

The questions for me are: how can we achieve the movement with an absolute economy of effort and distraction? What can be done to assist the actors with the manipulation? How can the ghost be best used to complement the text of the play? And of course, what should the ghost look like?

***Designer, Lis Evans and I have collaborated closely on the look of the puppet.***

Lis has visited regularly during the puppetry sessions, and at each stage we've discussed things such as the puppet's movement, weight and surface texture of fabric, and what the actors should wear when working it on stage.

***We have needed to draw back from some of our initial ideas.***

Conrad and I have had a number of discussions regarding the ghost both prior to and during rehearsals, which has resulted in the manipulation being gradually honed from one session to the next.

***Puppetry is a medium that can represent the unknown and the ethereal to great effect.***

Conrad and I discussed how best to marry this ethereal figure to the text, particularly when it speaks to Hamlet at length, as a puppet figure is not always best suited to this kind of extended dialogue. We looked at a number of possibilities, eventually settling on one of the ideas we discussed in the earlier stages of talking about the play --- to have an actor emerging from within the body of the ghost itself --- which would now mean the whole figure transforming from an ethereal fabric construct into the actor playing the dead King, as if his ghostly form were simply melting away from his body.



# Character Journey



It's often very useful in rehearsal to concentrate on the journey of one character. This is helpful to the actor playing that particular role – but it often throws up interesting thoughts for the other actors, as they examine their own character's place in that journey.

With the help of actor, **Richard Evans**, we examine in detail the dramatic journey of his character – **Polonius**.

## Overview

Polonius is a high state official; a politician, or a civil servant. You get the feeling that he runs Elsinore like a well oiled machine. However, at the start of the play two vital things have happened:

- The king has recently died, very suddenly, and power has shifted to his brother – Claudius – a very different kind of man, and a very different kind of king.
- Polonius has become old.

Polonius appears in just 8 scenes, through the first three acts of the play. The final moments of Act III see Hamlet dragging his dead body from the stage.

Use your copy of the play, or the scene breakdown in this pack, to examine the events of each scene from Polonius' point of view.

## Act I (Scene ii)

*An establishing scene for the character*

### What do we learn about Polonius' life?

- Polonius is a father, and a high state official. We see him in both capacities in this scene: performing his duties relating to the ambassadors, passing documents etc...; and admitting that he is reluctant to part with his son, Laertes.

- In our production his daughter Ophelia will be on stage for this scene also, though she doesn't speak. This choice establishes her as part of the court and part of the Polonius family.
- We learn that he is a very important member of the court, and the king pays very high tribute to him.

#### **What are Polonius' objectives in this scene?**

- To serve the king in matters of State.
- To support his son's request to go to France.

#### **What do we learn about Polonius' character?**

- Polonius is a man who uses 34 words when he could have used 8.

### **Act I (Scene iii)**

#### **What are Polonius' objectives?**

- To give his son some parting advice.
- To find out what's going on between Ophelia and Hamlet, and to put a stop to it.

#### **What do we learn about Polonius' character?**

- In Polonius' advice to Laertes, we hear a very pragmatic philosophy coming through. In our production he has it prepared in a book, as we feel Polonius has notebooks for everything.
- Although he starts gently, Polonius is ultimately very insensitive towards Ophelia. We sense his own insecurities coming through, as Ophelia's behaviour reflects on him. It's clear that Polonius does love her, but he has no understanding of how she is feeling.
- It's very important to show that there is real affection and warmth in order that the audience engage with this family and care about what happens to them – though there isn't much in the text to help us do this.

### **Act II (Scene i)**

#### **What are Polonius' objectives?**

- To set a spy on his son in Paris.
- To hear Ophelia's account of Hamlet's madness.

### **What do we learn about Polonius' character?**

- Here we see Polonius' way of going about things. In Shakespeare's script the spy is called Reynaldo, but Conrad has made a through line for the character of Osric, who is Polonius' trainee. Here he is instructing Osric in the art of entrapment and spying. This is Polonius the political operator, but it is also another example of how he tries to keep everything, including his children, under his control.
- There is a very significant moment in this scene, which is heightened in our production. Polonius loses track of his thoughts and needs to be reminded of what he was saying. This 'senior moment' is a clear indication that Polonius will not be able to keep control of his world any longer – and that he is genuinely under real stress. Madness is a key theme in the play and here we see a little glimpse of something that could well be dementia...
- Once Osric has departed and Ophelia enters, Polonius appears back on form. On hearing Ophelia's story, Polonius quickly jumps to the conclusion that spurned love is the cause of Hamlet's madness. He clearly believes very strongly in the power of love.

### **Act II (Scene ii)**

#### **What are Polonius' objectives?**

- To inform the king and queen that Hamlet's madness is due to love.
- To make a plan to spy on Hamlet.
- To speak to Hamlet and find out what is troubling him.
- To bring in the Players.

#### **What do we learn about Polonius' character?**

- In the first part of this scene we see Polonius once more in what I call his 'House of Commons' mode. He has some vital news, but matters of State must be dealt with first. He smugly waits to reveal that he has the answer to Hamlet's madness.
- In our production Ophelia comes on with him, as this helps the story telling and makes the whole thing even more painful for Ophelia (who has a journey of her own).
- It's clear that Polonius, in the way that he handles this situation is constantly protecting his position at court.
- In proposing the plan, we see Polonius the 'stage manager' – trying to keep control. He remains in this mode for the rest of the play.

- When Hamlet enters, Polonius' objective is to find out what's at the bottom of his strange behaviour. He thinks he can handle him – but Hamlet is too clever for him.
- Polonius is still very deferential, calling Hamlet 'my lord' all the time. It seems like he's caught between treating Hamlet like the naughty boy he once was, and the important man he is now.
- Hamlet's madness is something that 'control freak' Polonius simply cannot deal with – though, at this point in the play, he's still trying.
- At the end of this exchange it feels like Polonius' blood pressure has gone up a little more, but he has failed to find out anything – and hasn't taken back control.
- When Polonius comes back on with the Players, we learn that he is someone who enjoys good acting, and is free with his critical opinion. It's interesting that when this acting gets too real he isn't so keen.
- There's a little foreshadow of what's to come when Hamlet says to him – *after your death you were better have a bad epitaph than their ill report while you live*. In actual fact, Polonius will die that very night.

### **Act III (Scene i)**

#### **What are Polonius' objectives?**

- To press his view that Hamlet's mad for love.
- To spy on Hamlet and Ophelia.
- To persuade the King to go with another plan – for him to spy on Hamlet and Gertrude.

#### **What do we learn about Polonius' character?**

- In this scene we see matters slipping further out of Polonius' control, but he still clings to the best possible answer to Hamlet's madness.
- He feels conflicted about setting Ophelia as a trap when he says – *We are oft too blame in this* - It's important to still show that Polonius loves his daughter, even when he treats her badly. I think this moment also reveals what has characterised Polonius' life as a politician – hypocrisy and cover-ups.
- At the end of the scene – despite Hamlet's behaviour towards Ophelia – Polonius still insists that his diagnosis is correct. He artfully persuades the King to agree to one final plan – to use Gertrude as bait to discover Hamlet's secret. All the time he is formal in the way he addresses the King,



and defers to his final judgement on this matter. This is Polonius now clinging on by his fingertips.

### **Act III (Scene ii)**

#### **What are Polonius' objectives?**

- To prove that Hamlet's madness is for love.
- To attend to the King.
- To put his plan into action.

#### **What do we learn about Polonius' character?**

- He is dogged in his belief in the cause of Hamlet's madness. He's like a tank that can't turn round.
- When he returns to the scene to bring Hamlet to Gertrude, he still plays the game – sycophantically agreeing with everything Hamlet says. However, it's notable that all his formal language is gone. He doesn't call Hamlet 'my lord'. Whatever the reason for this – he's surely losing it...

### **Act III (Scene iii)**

#### **What are Polonius' objectives?**

- To get to get to Gertrude before Hamlet.
- To prove he's right.
- To gain control of the situation.

#### **What do we learn about Polonius' character?**

This is a very brief appearance – almost Polonius' last. He fails to properly address the King as 'my lord' – again indicating that events are overwhelming him and he's lost his formal language.

### **Act III (Scene iv)**

#### **What are Polonius' objectives?**

- To overhear what Hamlet says to Gertrude.
- To prove himself right about Hamlet's madness.

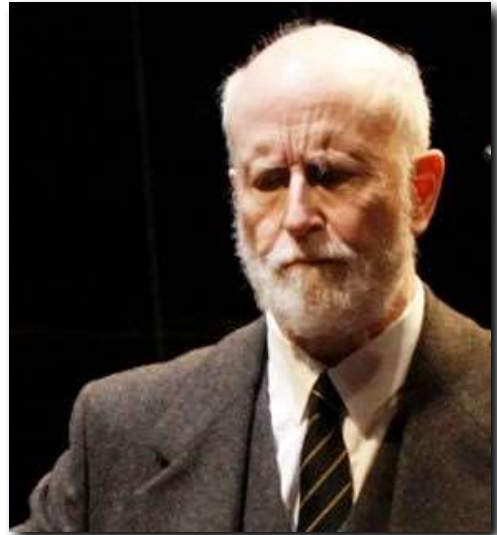
## What do we learn about Polonius' character?

- His last moments. Polonius is very abrupt with the Queen – giving her no due deference. The moment is urgent, practical – desperate even. He's finally lost control utterly – and his last cry of – *O, I am slain!* – feels like disbelief. Getting stabbed through the arras wasn't part of the plan.

## And in conclusion...

In the first instance we see Polonius as a highly regarded elder statesman; but quickly realise that his physical and mental powers are fading. He feels genuine affection for his grown up children, but at the very least there is a massive generation gap.

He is a man who has lived his whole life on his political wits, but from the very start he is under stress, which only increases as the situation spirals out of control. The inflexibility that comes with age, coupled with his 'control freakery' and his need to stay at the centre of power bring about his final downfall.



Polonius has an important dramatic function in that he pushes the action forward – setting things up and stage-managing meetings between characters. He is also involved in some of the lighter, more humorous scenes in the play. Polonius' death is a key dramatic turning point, and precipitates further tragedy for his children Ophelia and Laertes.

In speaking of the deaths of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Hamlet says – *Their defeat / Does by their own insinuation grow. / 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes / Between the pass and fell incensed points / Of might opposites.*

Hamlet is saying that through their own ambition Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were caught in the cross fire between himself and Claudius. The same may be said to be true of Polonius.

.....

## **SECTION 2**

### **History and context**

- Shakespeare's life

**1564**

- **William Shakespeare born in Stratford upon Avon.**
- *He was christened on April 26<sup>th</sup>, but it isn't known exactly what day he was born. Popular tradition holds that his birthday was April 23<sup>rd</sup> – St George's day, and also day on which we know he died, in 1616.*
- *His parents were John Shakespeare, a successful glove maker and his wife, Mary Arden.*
- *Two daughters, Joan and Margaret, had come before young William, but one had died in infancy and the other was certainly dead by 1569 when a second Joan Shakespeare was christened. So to his younger siblings Gilbert, Joan, Anne, Richard and Edmund, Will was big brother.*



**1571**

- *As an Alderman of Stratford, John Shakespeare was entitled to have his son educated free at the local Grammar School – though it's possible to imagine, from all the enthusiastic references in his plays, that Will preferred sports to studying.*
- *Throughout Will's childhood Stratford was visited by The Queen's Players, who performed in the Guild Hall, and we can be sure that Will must have seen them.*

**1582**

- *27<sup>th</sup> November, eighteen-year-old William married Anne Hathaway, who was seven or eight years older than him – and pregnant.*

**1583- 85**

- *Susanna Shakespeare was baptized on 26<sup>th</sup> May 1583*
- *1585 -- The Shakespeares were blessed with two more children, twins – Hamnet and Judith.*

- *Anne stayed all her life in Stratford, and little more is known about her.*

## 1585 – 92

- *It isn't known exactly when Shakespeare first went to London, but by 1592 he was established actor in the theatre, and writing his first plays – the Henry VI trilogy.*
- *During this period a young actor called Richard Burbage made his debut on the London stage. (More of him later)*



## 1592 – 1600

- *By 1594 Shakespeare was part-owner of a company known as the LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S MEN. Richard Burbage was the leading actor.*
- *In 1596 tragedy struck. Shakespeare's son Hamnet died, aged just eleven.*
- *Shakespeare wrote some of his most popular plays in this period, including The Merchant of Venice; Henry IV, parts 1 and 2; and Much Ado about Nothing. He was clearly very successful, as he had enough money to buy a posh house in Stratford.*
- *In 1599 the LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S MEN built a new theatre on the south bank of the Thames, called THE GLOBE.*

## 1600 – 01

- *Shakespeare was writing **HAMLET**, which was first performed around this time – with Richard Burbage in the title role.*
- *In 1601 Shakespeare's father, John, died.*

## 1603

- *24<sup>th</sup> March -- death of Queen Elizabeth I and the accession of James I.*
- *King James became the patron of Shakespeare's company and so the LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S MEN are renamed the KING'S MEN*
- ***HAMLET** was first printed.*

## 1604 – 08

- *Shakespeare wrote his most famous tragedies, including Macbeth; Othello and King Lear.*

- 1608 – death of Shakespeare's mother, Mary.

**1611**

- Shakespeare wrote *The Tempest* – the last play he wrote without collaboration.

**1616**

- 23<sup>rd</sup> April – death of Shakespeare in Stratford. He is buried at Holy Trinity Church and his epitaph reads:

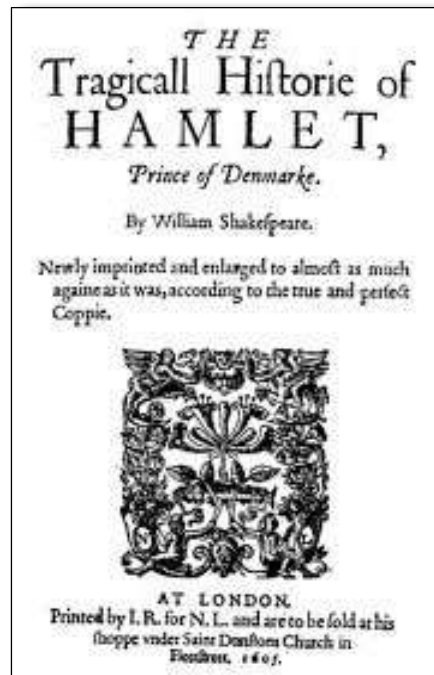
GOOD FRIEND, FOR JESUS' SAKE FORBEAR TO  
DIG THE DUST ENCLOSED HERE  
BLESSED BE THE MAN THAT SPARES THESE STONES AND  
CURSED BE HE WHO MOVES MY BONES



## Shakespeare and...

### Shakespeare's sources

An old legend of 'Amleth' can be traced back hundreds of years before Shakespeare wrote his play – first in the oral tradition, and eventually written down. It appears in Latin around 1200 in Saxo Grammaticus' *History of the Danes*. This is a semi-fictional work and not what we would call 'history' at all.



There was also a French version of the story, published when Shakespeare was just a lad; and it seems likely there was an earlier play called *The Ur-Hamlet*, which is now lost.

The original story concerns Amleth, whose father is killed by his brother, Feng. This is known from the start, and Feng claims his dead brother's lands and widow – Gurutha. Amleth then pretends to be mad in order to convince Feng that he is no threat to him.

A girl is set to trap Amleth, and he accidentally stabs one of his uncle's spies. There is also a scene in which Amleth confronts his mother; and Uncle Feng – unconvinced by Amleth's madness – sends him away to England to be killed.

Here the story differs from Shakespeare's play as Amleth reaches England, but is not killed. Instead he marries the English princess. A year later, when he returns to Denmark to avenge his father, Amleth walks in on his own funeral, as he is presumed dead. Eventually Amleth does kill his uncle, is elected King, and returns to England to fetch his bride.

Clearly there are differences between this old tale and Shakespeare's masterpiece and it's obvious that the playwright developed the storyline to explore his own themes and characters. Shakespeare also turns Amleth's ultimate triumph into Hamlet's Tragedy.

## Players of the Dane

The role of Hamlet is one that actors (and actresses) have coveted for over four hundred years. Every century and generation has reinvented him for their own times.

### Richard Burbage c 1601

- The first Hamlet at The Globe Theatre. It's possible that the first time audiences heard that most famous soliloquy it began –  
*To be, or not to be? Aye there's the point –*



### David Garrick 1772/3

- His production (and performance) of Hamlet was well received by the audiences at Drury Lane – despite the fact that he cut the Gravedigger!

### Sarah Siddons 1783

- The first woman known to play the Dane. There was a public outcry, but the critics thought she was ok.



### Henry Irving c 1880



- Though he made massive cuts, Irving's version was exceptionally long, due to scene changes and additional music. Irving was the first actor to be knighted, and a real crowd pleaser in his day.



**Sarah Bernhardt 1885-1900**

- Another great actress of her day making a success of cross-dressing the Danish Prince.



**Laurence Olivier 1948**

- Olivier also directed this film – in which he brings us a very psychological interpretation of *To be, or not to be* – as a voice-over; as if Hamlet is thinking this most famous soliloquy.

**David Tennant 2008**

- Tennant returned to the stage, after a successful run as TV's Doctor Who, to take on the Danish Prince in this acclaimed production by The Royal Shakespeare Company.



This is just a tiny portion of the thousands of actors who have played the role of Hamlet over the centuries, and across the world. Most people remember the first one they ever saw –



## A play called 'Hamlet'

## The text(s)

There are three key early printed texts of the play we know as Hamlet.

In order to understand the implications of these three quite different texts, we need to know something about the printing of plays in Shakespeare's time.

A play would be first published some time after it was first performed. This would be in a book form known as a QUARTO.

- **Quarto** simply means a book in which the paper is folded twice to make four leaves. Shakespeare's plays were printed individually during his lifetime in this format.

The first Quarto of Hamlet was published around 1603, and is known as Q1. It's the shortest of the three texts, but differs greatly from the other two. For example – two characters called Laertes and Ofelia have a father called Corambis; and the most famous speech in English literature begins --- *To be, or not to be – ay there's the point.*

The second Quarto (Q2) was published hot on the heels of Q1 around 1604–5. Scholars believe that this, much longer text, was printed as a deliberate attempt by Shakespeare's company to correct and displace the 'unauthorised' Q1. Based on strong evidence, scholars generally agree that Q2 is derived from an authorial manuscript and is the most authoritative text of the play called Hamlet.

There were two further Quartos published before 1623, which were basically reprints of Q2.

Finally, seven years after Shakespeare's death, the first FOLIO of his complete works was published.

- **Folio** is a book in which the paper is folded once to create the leaves of a large book. From the earliest days of printing folios were used for most prestigious publication.

The First Folio (F1) entitled:

*Mr William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies.  
Published according to the True Originall Copies.*

was printed in 1623 in the shop of William Jaggard and Son. Hamlet appears among the Tragedies; a text widely accepted to be a variant on Q2.

## **To cut, or not to cut**

## **Editing the text(s)**

The uncut text of Hamlet lasts over four hours in performance. Every director has to meet with the challenge of either producing a very long evening – or cutting the play to make it a more practical length for the theatre. Even more must be cut to make it into a film. In fact, the play benefits from careful surgery.

Q1, Q2 and F1 all differ greatly, and the theatre director is dependent on the scholar to sift through the texts in the first instance and make choices about what should be included in a script for study and performance.

Scholars agree that Q2 and F1 are the most complete, reliable and authentic texts – though F1 lacks about 230 lines that appear in Q2, while Q2 is missing approximately 70 lines that are included in F1.

The text Conrad Nelson is using is the text of Q2 (The Arden Shakespeare – 2006), with some inclusions from F1. He has made detailed cuts throughout.



## SECTION 3

### English and Drama

- Drama Games



### Connections

This game is a fun way of getting to understand how everyone in the play is connected to the others.

The leader prepares a set of cards for every character in the play – with brief biographical detail from the start of the story.

For example – **OPHELIA's** might say:

*A Lady of the Court*  
*Polonius is her dad*  
*Laertes is her brother*  
*Hamlet is her boyfriend*

Players of the game are each given a card and then let loose to find their 'connections'. They must decide upon the most important connections and group themselves accordingly.

Once connections have been made, each character may then formally read their character's name and connections out loud.

A nice twist to this is to add a folded section of the card, on which is written the character's ultimate 'fate'. This would only be revealed once all the connections have been made.

### The King Rises

This game of concentration introduces a key scene and a couple of lines from the play.

The scene is Act 3, scene 2 – at the end of the play within the play, when Claudius stands up and runs out. The lines are as follows:

*The king rises*  
*Give me some light! Away!*

Players of the game form a standing circle.

One person is selected to be **The King**, and sits in the centre of the circle.

It's then a waiting game, as **The King** imagines watching the play-within-the-play.

At a moment of their choosing, **The King** will stand – at which point, everyone in the circle cries (in unison) --- ***The king rises!***

The King says --- ***Give me some light, away*** -- and leaves the circle, touching someone on their way out. They then rejoin the circle; the person that they touched becomes the new **King** and the games resumes.



### **Alas Poor Yorick**

This game familiarises students with a famous speech, in bite size chunks; and introduces the language in a fun and gentle way.

Players stand in a circle around a 'skull' (scrunched up piece of paper). They then take it in turns to step forward, pick up the skull and say –

***Alas, poor Yorick. I knew him, Horatio.***

The Leader then reads one line, or clause, from the speech (it doesn't have to be in order).

The Player holding the skull then sets it down and returns to the circle, before the next person steps forward to pick up the skull and say the famous line.

The Leader will then read out a different line of text; and so on, until everyone has had a go.

### **Funny words**

This game is a fun way of breaking down the barriers of unfamiliar words.

Player composes an insult, using one word from columns 1,2,3. They then say it to someone in the group, using an attitude from column 4. The recipient of their insult then has right of reply, in the same way. And so on...

1	2	3	4
Goatish	Fly-bitten	Giglet	Snooty
Loggerheaded	Fool-born	Haggard	Angry
Lumpish	Hedge-born	Water-fly	Disgusted
Mewling	Idle-headed	Lowt	Afraid
Dribbling	Guts-gripping	Maggot-pie	Sly



## PRINCE HAMLET – Detective!

This is a fun exercise to do with students who are not yet familiar with the play.

We imagine that the ghost disappears before he has had chance to tell Hamlet who the murderer is. Here's Hamlet – in the 1940s style of our production -- to tell you all about it...

... It was a night so dark you could polish your boots with it. An old college friend, name of Horatio, had persuaded me there was something worth seeing up on the battlements, and I guess I couldn't resist.

I was kinda spooked. He said the guards up there had seen a ghost and, though I generally wouldn't go for that kind of baloney, I admit I was curious. If the spirit of my dead father was really hanging round the castle, I needed to see him. To say I felt blue about him dying would be an understatement at the very least. Truth was, I just couldn't get over it – and the hasty marriage of my dear, darling mother to Uncle Claudius hadn't helped matters any. It's not that I didn't like Uncle Claudius – just that every time he smiled at me I felt like taking a bath.

It wasn't exactly cosy out on the battlements; the wind cut through me like a cheap violin. Then, all of a sudden, the temperature dropped out of sight and in its place, a ghostly vision appeared – my father.

The apparition beckoned to me and I followed, alone. I don't mind telling you I was pretty sorry I'd had pickled herring for supper. When we'd gone some distance, the vision finally turned and spoke to me. He had quite a lot to say – for a dead guy.

***"List, list, O list,  
If thou didn't ever thy dear father love –  
Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder!  
Murder most foul –"***

At that moment the first foggy light of dawn crept along the ground like smoke, while somewhere a cockerel sounded the alarm – and the ghost was gone.

My father murdered! Had I suspected all along? If I had, it sure didn't feel like it. The news took the wind out of me better than a well-timed slug in the guts. Last night's pickled herring made another bid for freedom, but I kept it down. I had work to do. Find out who killed my father...



Laertes?



Claudius?



Gertrude?



Polonius?



Ophelia?

?



Prince Hamlet – Detective!

Polonius    A smooth political operator, who seems to be in high favour with the new King. Is he the power behind the throne?

Gertrude    The grieving widow, or is she? It hasn't taken her very long to get over the death of her husband and marry his brother!



Laertes     Hot headed son of Polonius. He doesn't appear to have a motive – but he's very keen to return to France. Is he fleeing the scene of the crime?

Claudius    The man with most to gain from his brother's death – ambition, crown and queen. He had the motive – but did he have the opportunity?

Ophelia     The one you'd least expect – but she is in love with Hamlet, and it's likely that the old King would not have approved of their relationship. As they say in France 'cherchez la femme'.

Study the play up to line 27 in Act 1, scene 5 – 'Murder most foul'.  
Look for clues in the text.

Consider the five suspects – Laertes, Polonius, Gertrude, Claudius and Ophelia.

Work out their characters, their position in the court, and what motive they might have had for killing the king.

Present your findings as evidence – who do *you* think did it?

Then read on to find out who done it...



## **What's it all about?**

*Scene guide for exploring key themes of the play*

Ghosts	Act 1, scene 1 Act 1, scene 4 Act 3, scene 4
Friendship 216 – 316)	Act 2, scene 2 (Lines Act 3, scene 2 (Lines 49 – 85)
Families	Act 1, scene 3 Act 3, scene 4
Grief	Act 1, scene 2 (Lines 129 – 159) Act 5, scene 1 (Lines 212 – 281)
Madness	Act 2, scene 2 (Lines 168 – 214) Act 4, scene 5 (up to line 192)
Revenge	Act 3, scene 3 (Lines 73 – 96) Act 4, scene 5 (Lines 193 – 211)
Suicide	Act 3, scene 1 (Lines 55 – 87)



## **Character Journey**

Look at our sample – Polonius journey from the first section of this pack. Do the same for a character of your choice.

Here are some of the key questions you might ask about your character:

- What scenes do they appear in?
- What happens in those scenes?
- What are their circumstances at the start of the play?
- Who is important to them?
- Who is a problem to them?
- What do they want?
- What do they know?
- What don't they know?
- What discoveries do they make, and when?
- What is their fate? Does this impact on the course of the play?

## Hamlet's women

## Discussion and Debate

### *Ophelia & Gertrude -- analysis*

Consider the role of the two women in the play.  
Their relationship with Hamlet  
Their relationship with other men in the play  
Their relationship with each other

How do they contrast with each other? Compare the deaths of the two women. Are there similarities?

To what extent does the context of NB's production realise/present/explain the particular circumstances of Ophelia and Gertrude?

### *Fortinbras – an extra woman!*

Conrad has made Young Fortinbras a woman (see interview)

What does this do to the play – particularly the ending?



## Soliloquy

## Shakespeare's language

An exploration of the most famous speech in the English language

### *To be, or not to be –*

#### Familiarise

- Choric reading – read aloud together
- Read around a circle – taking one line each
- Walk and talk – read the speech aloud, while walking round the room. Change direction every time you come to a punctuation mark.
- Question and answer
  - Consider the way the speech poses questions, and then answers them. Divide the group into two. Read the speech aloud, with one group posing questions, and the other group answering.

- Line endings.
  - Can you trace the journey of the speech through the last words of each line? Are they important words in the speech? Compare the first words of each line with the last words.
  - Can you identify any other key words?

### In depth

- What is revealed about Hamlet's state of mind?
- What can we learn about Hamlet's character?
- What are the key themes of the speech?
- How do the ideas develop?
- What is the journey of the speech? How does Hamlet begin, and where does he end up? What is the argument? What conclusions does he draw?
- Where does this speech fit within the play? What comes before? When have we last seen Hamlet, and what was he saying then? What comes immediately after the speech?
- Consider the poetic devices Shakespeare is using – such as metaphor and alliteration.
- Why do you think this speech is so famous?



## **Credits and links**

Production and rehearsal photos: Nobby Clark

Design drawings and model: Lis Evans

Puppet drawing: Lee Threadgold

Hamlet battlements; drawing by Edward Gordon Craig

Information and additional images sourced at:

<http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/content/view/12/12>

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/hamlet/past\\_productions/rsc\\_stage\\_1700\\_1900.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/hamlet/past_productions/rsc_stage_1700_1900.shtml)

<http://www.bl.uk/treasures/shakespeare/18thcentury.html>

Recommended reading –

***The North Face of Shakespeare: Activities for Teaching the Plays***

James Stredder (with a foreword by Cicely Berry)

***Shakespeare on Toast: Getting a Taste for the Bard***

Ben Crystal

Information and education pack written and compiled by  
Deborah McAndrew for Northern Broadsides © 2011

