***Hamlet* Essay Planning Guide**

**Prompt:** How does Hamlet’s apparent madness impact the central ideas of the text to reveal a theme? Write a literary analysis using proper grammar, conventions, spelling, and grade-appropriate words and phrases. Cite of strong and thorough textual evidence in each paragraph to support the analysis, including direct quotations and parenthetical citations.

**Steps to answer this question**

1. Trace the development and perceptions of Hamlet’s madness in the play.
2. Determine whether Hamlet is “mad” (as in crazy) or “mad in craft” (as in pretending to be crazy).
3. Gather textual evidence to prove your claims. See your chart for the evidence you have gathered so far.
4. Determine the impact of his insanity or pretense.
5. Select one or two central ideas of *Hamlet.* (e.g., vengeance for a wronged father, questioning life after death, etc.).
6. Examine how his insanity or pretense shapes and refines the selected central ideas to reveal a theme. See introduction notes for list of possible themes.

**English IV Paper Reminders**

* Your paper should be approximately 500 words/2-3 pages.
* Use the chunk method of paragraph writing in body paragraphs to ensure an appropriate ratio of evidence to commentary.
* For each piece of textual evidence, you must provide 2-3 sentences of well-developed commentary.
* Your commentary should answer the question “So what?” Why did you include this piece of evidence? Your commentary will be your explanatory sentence(s)/e.g. the “how” and/or the “why”.
* Remember that the ratio of commentary to evidence should be at least 2:1, so you should have more commentary than evidence.
* Do not quote drop! If you start a sentence with quotation marks, it is wrong. Use cite phrases and transitions that indicate textual evidence, OR seamlessly integrate quotes into your paper.
* Textual evidence is **required** in the **body** paragraphs; do not use textual evidence in the introduction or conclusion paragraphs.
* When you cite the textual evidence from *Hamlet*, use the Act, Scene, and Line number; do not use the page number. For example, “To be or not to be: that is the question/ Whether tis nobler in the mind to suffer” (III, I, 56-57). You may also use this format: (3.1.56-57).
* When typing the title of the play in the paper, italicize the title *Hamlet*. **Do not use quotation marks around the name of the play**. Obviously when discussing the character of Hamlet, you will not italicize his name.
* Use MLA formatting, typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font.
* Your paper must have a title. Center your title; it must be the same font as the paper. Do not make it bold, do not underline it, do not put quotation marks around it.
* Insert your last name and page number in the upper right hand corner, beginning with page one (see example below).
* If you struggle with writing, see the Hamlet Essay Planning Guide on my website: mdlivingston.weebly.com. You may use it as a more structured way to write. Other writing resources are also available on my website.
* Use OWL Purdue for any formatting/citation guidelines.
* Your paper counts as a test grade and is due on or before \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Possible Paper Outline**

Paragraph 1: Introductory paragraph  
Paragraph 2: Body paragraph proving Hamlet’s madness/apparent madness  
Paragraph 3: Body paragraph proving Hamlet’s madness/apparent madness  
Paragraph 4: Body paragraph proving how Hamlet’s madness/apparent madness refines/creates a theme. (You may include two body paragraphs if needed.)  
Paragraph 5: Conclusion paragraph

**Body Paragraph Outline**

Sentence 1: Topic Sentence (your claim)  
Sentence 2: Textual Evidence #1 (parenthetically cited and introduced with a transition/cite phrase- DO NOT QUOTE DROP!)  
Sentences 3 and 4: Commentary #1 (Explanatory sentence(s): (your “how” and/or “why”)   
Sentence 5: Textual Evidence #2 (parenthetically cited and introduced with a transition/cite phrase- DO NOT QUOTE DROP!)  
Sentences 6 and 7: Commentary #2 (Explanatory sentence(s): (your “how” and/or “why”)  
Sentence 8: Conclusion sentence to connect to the next idea or paragraph or to synthesize previous chunk(s)

**Intro and Conclusion Paragraph Outline**  
Introduction: Hook, bridge sentence, thesis statement\*\*  
Conclusion: thesis statement (paraphrased), bridge sentence, “So what?” statement

\*\*I must approve all thesis statements.

Presley 1

Elvis Presley

Mrs. Livingston

English IV

15 February 2019

Title of Paper

This will be the first sentence of your *Hamlet* essay. Be sure that your paper is typed and double spaced using Times New Roman 12 point font. You must include textual evidence, parenthetical citations, and insightful commentary. Do not press “enter” twice. Do not press the space bar twice between words. Good luck on your paper.

**Composing your Essay**

**Step 1: Thesis Statement-** Compose the controlling idea of your paper. Remember that your thesis statement must include the position you will prove and which theme you will discuss. See “Thesis Statement Helps” handout for thesis stems.

Thesis Statement: <Type Sentence Here>

* You will then add your thesis statement to an introductory paragraph.

**Introductory paragraph**

Sentence 1: Hook sentence: <Type Sentence Here>  
Sentence 2: Bridge Sentence: <Type Sentence Here>  
Sentence 3: Thesis statement (In your actual paper, the thesis will be the **last** sentence of your introductory paragraph. There is no need to rewrite it here, though. Simply see above.).

**Step 2: Body Paragraphs 1 and 2**- The topic of the first body paragraphs should be whether Hamlet is “mad” or “mad in craft.” You will prove your claims using evidence from the text.

Do you think Hamlet is mad or mad in craft? <Type Answer Here>

Cite at least 3 pieces of specific textual evidence that prove your claim, and do not forget your parenthetical citation. For each piece of textual evidence, you will provide 2-3 sentences of commentary. Your commentary should answer the question “So What?” Why did you include this piece of evidence? Your commentary will be your explanatory sentence(s)/e.g. the “how” and/or the “why”. Remember that the ratio of commentary to evidence should be at least 2:1, so you should have more commentary than evidence.

1. Textual evidence #1 (with parenthetical citation): <Type Evidence with Citation Here>
   1. Commentary for evidence 1: <Type 2-3 Sentences of Commentary for Evidence 1 Here- E.g. the “how” or the “why”>
2. Textual evidence #2 (with parenthetical citation): <Type Evidence with Citation Here>
   1. Commentary for evidence 2: <Type 2-3 Sentences of Commentary for Evidence 2 Here- E.g. the “how” or the “why”>
3. Textual evidence #3 (with parenthetical citation): <Type Evidence with Citation Here>
   1. Commentary for evidence 3: <Type 2-3 Sentences of Commentary for Evidence 3 Here- E.g. the “how” or the “why”>
4. Textual evidence #4 (with parenthetical citation): <Type Evidence with Citation Here>
   1. Commentary for evidence 4: <Type 2-3 Sentences of Commentary for Evidence 4 Here- E.g. the “how” or the “why”>

**Step 3: Determine which evidence belongs in which body paragraph-** Use 2 pieces of textual evidence/commentary in one paragraph, and 2 pieces of textual evidence/commentary in another. If you need to add evidence and commentary, be sure to do so.

**Step 4: Topic and conclusion sentences-** For each chunk of information, write a topic and conclusion sentence. Remember that a topic sentence should clearly state your debatable claim (e.g. what you will discuss in the paragraph) and your conclusion sentences can either summarize/synthesize the paragraph or connect to the next paragraph. Do not start or end your paragraph with textual evidence.

Topic sentence for body paragraph 1: <Type Sentence Here>  
  
In this paragraph, I will include the evidence and commentary (see above) from numbers \_\_\_#\_\_\_ and \_\_\_#\_\_\_\_.   
  
Conclusion sentence for body paragraph 1: <Type Sentence Here>

Topic sentence for body paragraph 2: <Type Sentence Here>  
  
In this paragraph, I will include the evidence and commentary (see above) from numbers \_\_\_#\_\_\_ and \_\_\_#\_\_\_\_.   
  
Conclusion sentence for body paragraph 2: <Type Sentence Here>

**Step 5: Put it all together-** Reread your paragraphs, and make them coherent, organized, and united. Then, you have your first two body paragraphs. Now you should have two body paragraphs.

**Step 6: Body paragraph 3**- For this body paragraph, you will use the same format as the two paragraphs above, but instead of proving Hamlet’s madness/apparent madness, you will prove how his madness/apparent madness develops a theme.

Theme that I think Hamlet’s madness/apparent madness best helps to develop: <Type Theme Here>

1. Topic sentence (should include the theme above): <Type Sentence Here>
2. Textual evidence #1 (with parenthetical citation): <Type Evidence with Citation Here>
   1. Commentary for evidence 1: <Type 2-3 Sentences of Commentary for Evidence 1 Here- E.g. the “how” or the “why”>
3. Textual evidence #2 (with parenthetical citation): <Type Evidence with Citation Here>
   1. Commentary for evidence 2: <Type 2-3 Sentences of Commentary for Evidence 1 Here- E.g. the “how” or the “why”>
   2. Conclusion sentence: <Type Sentence Here>

**Step 7: Compose a conclusion paragraph.**

Sentence 1: Restatement of the thesis (paraphrased): <Type Sentence Here>  
Sentence 2: Bridge Sentence: <Type Sentence Here>  
Sentence 3: So What? Statement: <Type Sentence Here>

**Step 8: Type your paper,** and add the appropriate transitions for unity and coherence. Be sure to including parenthetically cited textual evidence. Revisit the paper and paragraph outline at the top of this guide. Type your paper in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font (double-spaced).

**Step 9:** Proofread, proofread, proofread!