

Hamlet

Act 1.2 – Discussion/Study Questions

- A. Refer to your copy of *Hamlet*. Listen to a masterful reading and read Act 1.2, lines 1–96 (from “’Tis sweet and commendable in your nature” to “for some term / to do obsequious sorrow”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

In lines 90–92, who is Hamlet mourning?

What are the first two adjectives that the King Claudius uses to describe Hamlet’s nature?

Evaluate Claudius’s sincerity about Hamlet’s “sweet and commendable” nature (line 90). What evidence from the text supports your position?

How does Claudius view the loss of Hamlet’s father?

How does Claudius emphasize his point in lines 93–94?

- B. Listen to a masterful reading and read Act 1.1, lines 96–101 (from “But to persevere / In obstinate condolment is a course” to “a mind impatient / An understanding simple and unschooled”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Summarize lines 93–98. What is Claudius saying to Hamlet?

What idea links the phrases “mourning duties” (line 92), “filial obligation” (line 95), and “obsequious sorrow” (line 96)?

What is Claudius suggesting about grief and its relationship to duty?

In lines 96–98, of what fault does Claudius accuse Hamlet?

What does Claudius mean when he calls Hamlet's grief "unmanly" in line 98?

- C. Listen to and read lines 102–110 (from "For what we know must be and is as common" to "till he that died today / 'This must be so'")) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

In line 102, what does Claudius mean by "what we know must be"?

Where earlier in the speech has Claudius made a similar point?

What does Claudius's repeated insistence upon death as an everyday occurrence imply about Hamlet's character?

In line 107, how does Hamlet's grief appear "to reason," according to Claudius?

What is the reasonable attitude toward death, according to Claudius?

Paraphrase Claudius's monologue thus far into a single sentence.