

How thoroughly did you read Act 1 Scene 2? Answer the following questions, being as precise as you can. The answers will help you answer your coursework question.

1. Claudius's speech (p.15) is full of contradictions. Find three and list them (look around lines 10-15).
2. Does Claudius's speech seem sincere or insincere to you? Explain why.
3. Why is Fortinbras mentioned in this speech? Why has Shakespeare included this information?
4. What information do we learn about Laertes? Why does Shakespeare put it here, just before the discussion about Hamlet leaving Wittenberg?
5. What is Hamlet's first line in the play? Why is it important? What does it tell the audience?
6. What does Gertrude tell Hamlet to do?
7. What is Hamlet's response?
8. What is Claudius's advice?
9. Why is Claudius's rebuke, 'Fie, 'tis a fault to be heaven, / A fault against the dead, a fault to nature' an ironic statement for Claudius to make? Be precise in your answer – explain the three reasons.
10. Why do you think Shakespeare has Hamlet using Greek mythology to describe his father, Claudius and his mother?
11. What statements does Hamlet make to Horatio that suggest he is bitter about his mother's marriage? (Look for two on page 25).
12. How does Shakespeare show Hamlet's immediate interest in Horatio's report of the ghost?
13. How does Shakespeare reveal that Hamlet already has suspicions about his father's death? (Look on p.29)
14. What does Hamlet's last line, 'Foul deeds will rise / Though all the earth o'erwhelm them to men's eyes' mean? Later on in the play, why might you consider this to be a significant statement for Hamlet to make?
15. Why does Shakespeare have Hamlet mostly speak in blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter)?