

Part 1 – Characterization and Plot

1. What does Polonius' actions toward Laertes in I.i tell us about his character? How would you describe Polonius at this point in the story? Give examples and textual evidence from Acts I & II to support your response.
2. What is the relationship between Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, and Hamlet?
3. By the end of Act II, scene ii, what are many characters wondering about Hamlet? Discuss these characters, and the reasons for their opinions about Hamlet.
4. What news does Voltmand bring from Norway?
5. What plan does Hamlet devise to assure himself of King Claudius' guilt?

Part 2 – Dramatic Devices

1. At the beginning of Act II, scene i, what indicates that some time has passed?
2. Explain Polonius' line, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in't."
3. What is the purpose of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's characters?
4. Why does Hamlet compare Denmark to a prison?
5. Hamlet recalled one play about the Trojan War as told by Aeneas to Dido, Queen of Carthage. Explain the story he recounted.
6. The character of Hamlet has already employed the use of the aside, the soliloquy, and in Act II, scene ii, the monologue. Discuss the similarities and differences between these dramatic devices.

Part 3 – Big Ideas

1. What questions or "big ideas" have emerged at the end of Act II, scene i?
2. In what way(s) does Act II, scene ii parallel scene i?
3. Discuss how the themes of corruption/mistrust/deceit are emphasized in Act II. Hint: there are several examples.
4. Explain Hamlet's response when he discerns the reason for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's appearance.
5. Analyze Hamlet's last soliloquy in Act II (pp. 49-50). What flaws does he recognize in himself?
6. How does Hamlet's plan to reveal Claudius' guilt emphasize the flaw(s) he identifies in this last soliloquy?