

Possible topics for *Hamlet* paper.

This 5-paragraph paper needs to be approximately 2 ½ pages, typed in Times New Roman, 12 pt. Use at the very least 5 quotations from the play. If the quote types into MORE than four lines, indent and single space the quote itself. Limit the “to be” verbs (is, are, am, was, were, be, been, being) to no more than FIVE.

1. Consider an issue or problem raised in *Hamlet*. Form an opinion, an argument, and a thesis. Write a five-paragraph essay exploring the issue.
2. What appears is not so – separating what *seems* from what *is*
Discuss this concept drawing on examples of the following:
Gertrude’s mourning for Claudius
Rosencrantz and Guildenstern’s friendship with Hamlet
Claudius’ praying in his room
Polonius’ behavior
Hamlet’s love/lack of love for Ophelia
The fictional play “The Murder of Gonzago” or “The Mousetrap”
Audience members seeing the play within a play are also players
3. What traits of character in Laertes, Horatio and Young Fortinbras help the audience see Hamlet more clearly?
4. All men and women must eventually deal with the problem of death. Man, while wonderful is also mortal. We realize our own mortality only slowly. The play’s progression takes Hamlet along the road to a personal discovery of his mortality. We too, as the audience, come to realize, but only slowly and progressively, that we will die. Using Act 5 primarily, trace Hamlet’s revelation of death from the entrance into the cemetery, discovery of Yorick’s skull, discovery of Ophelia’s death (young woman he loved), to the death of a parent, and finally, through his receiving of a mortal blow in combat and the understanding of his own death.
5. Images of weeds, disease, and contagion abound in *Hamlet*. Trace these images, decide on Shakespeare’s meaning for these three images, and explain what the images point to as major themes in the play.