

**SHAKESPEARE MIDTERM:** When you study, think in these terms about the plays.

The purpose of this course is to focus on the plays as artistic constructions composed of elements that cohere to explore a complex of dense ideas: How do quotes demonstrate character qualities that pertain to issues explored in the play as a whole? How are scenes sequenced in ways that help explore these issues? How are symbols/imagery used to convey ideas? How do figures of speech further emphasize character qualities and issues important in the play?

**Midterm Homework-- to help study for the test:** (6 pts quotes, 4 pts short answer)

Bring in **6** quotes (chosen from **the boldfaced list of characters that will be on the test**; 4 should be minor characters and all three plays should be covered). Make two copies of your quotes, one identifying the person speaking and citing page and line number, one with no identification. The one with page numbers will be turned in for journal credit (6 pts). The other copy will be shared with your group to get practice in identifying quotes. **Also**, paraphrase one of your quotes and **answer “Short Answer Question #1** according to the sample on my website (4 pts. journal credit).

Choose the quotes because they are central to themes/issues explored in that play or because they demonstrate essential values, attitudes, thought processes (and style) pertaining to what that character represents in the complex of ideas that the play explores. Minor characters function as “foils,” representing contrasting values, ways of seeing.

Omit parts of the quote that provide overt plot clues (using ellipses– three dots). If the quote then becomes incoherent, insert [in brackets] what is needed to make a sentence. You might also want to omit parts of the quote that seem less essential, so that you can include the dense parts without the quote becoming too long. (However, the quote needs to be complete sentences to be comprehensible.)

**Test Format-- mainly multiple choice and matching** (brackets mean that item will not be on this test)

Terms (be able to apply the terms): blank verse, iambic pentameter, trochaic tetrameter, [sonnet], quarto, bad quarto, folio, First Folio, comedy, tragedy, history play, [classical unities], foreshadowing, protagonist, soliloquy, metaphor, [Petrarchan love], Senecan drama, stage machiavel (and “white mac.”), medieval Vice, Miles Gloriosus, psychomachia, equivocation, dramatic irony, stichomythia, [oxymoron], [malapropism].

**Quote Identification:** There will be a matching section listing quotes and asking you to identify the character speaking (characters on the test are listed below). Consider the minor characters as “foils” to the major ones– what qualities/attitudes do they have that are important to issues explored in the play?  
**Richard, Clarence, Hastings, Margaret, Anne, Macbeth, Lady Macbeth, a witch, Banquo, Macduff, the porter, Hal, Hotspur, Falstaff, King Henry, Earl of Worcester**

There might be a matching section of symbols and plays (concrete images or things that represent important ideas in their respective plays).

Multiple choice or fill-in-the-blank questions might concern the following:

Chronology (the general order in which plays were composed) and genre (whether the play is a tragedy, history play, or comedy). Ways in which the play is typical or atypical of that genre.

[Whether a play subscribes to the classical unities or radically breaks them.]

Examples of foreshadowing, dramatic irony, a stage machiavel or a white machiavel, a Vice figure, parallel balancing.

Whether plays make use of varied verse forms (like trochaic tetrameter) and of very stylized, ritualized exchanges between characters (like stichomythia).

Whether a quote contains a figure of speech or trope (like metaphor or dramatic irony).

Factual questions--something important to interpreting issues in a play (for example, Has Macbeth considered killing Duncan before the witches say anything to him?" Or "What scene in the tavern pairs with the one where Hal has an interview with his father-- and how?").

**Short-Answer Questions** (there will be two, #1 and one of the other three)

1. Explain: **1)** the **context** (who is talking to whom, and when; also the intention/purpose of the speaker. **2)** the **significance** with regard to an **issue or question** the play explores. Deal with how connotations and metaphors pertain to complexities about a concept or question explored. (See the "model" answer passed out in class; it is also on my website.) The 4-pt practice should be in the form of the model.
2. The opening scene in a Shakespearean play often sets up themes that will be significant in the overall work. It might provide a visual "picture" of a mental situation or an abstract condition. In some way, it might "summarize" a relationship important in the whole play. Explain how the opening of a given play functions in this manner. Support generalizations with details that provide evidence.
3. Scene sequencing is one of Shakespeare's strengths as a dramatist: sometimes, the sequence produces irony, giving insight into themes or issues important in the play; other times, a scene comes up later that pairs with and comments on an earlier scene. I'll give a pair or sequence and ask you to explain how the two together communicate complexities concerning some issue.
4. Explain how something (*e.g.*, a costume or stage prop) functions symbolically in its play. (I'll give you a couple to choose from.).

**Sample Answer for Short Essay #1:** there is a sample answer (for Richard's opening soliloquy) on my website (it's called "Sample Short Answer for the Midterm") and a sheet on "how to state significance."