

Hamlet's Soliloquies

Complete an analysis of one of Hamlet's soliloquies. In your analysis, think about the following.

1. Summarize the context of the soliloquy, explaining what has happened just before to motivate this soliloquy. Break the speech into complete thoughts. Clearly mark the different thoughts, and be prepared to submit the marked-up speech with your written exercise.
2. "Most of Shakespeare's set speeches and soliloquies have three parts: the **response to a specific set of circumstances**, the character's **intellectual and emotional exploration** of that situation, and the **resolution**. Avoid generalizing the emotion and instead engage the audience so that they follow the character's thought process." John Barton Playing Shakespeare. Divide and explain the following soliloquies into Barton's three categories.
3. Comment on the following
 - Mood/atmosphere (tone)
 - Attitude toward others
 - Attitude toward self
 - Motifs/repeated images or concepts
 - Views/values represented
 - Shift/moments of realization
 - Significant references / points of diction
 - Poetic devices & effects (rhetorical devices)
4. What do we learn about Hamlet's character in this soliloquy? Think about the following questions.
 - How does Hamlet think through his question? What excuses does he use? What are his fears? What are his options? What resolution does he come to?
 - How does Shakespeare use imagery, diction, and meter to enhance Hamlet's decision making process?
 - How does Shakespeare's syntax affect meaning in the soliloquy? Consider how the complex sentences and use of questions show Hamlet's emotions.
 - What kinds of emotions is Hamlet experiencing and how do you know?
 - What would you argue is Hamlet's most significant emotion at this point in the play?
 - How does Shakespeare's diction contribute to the tone of the soliloquy?
 - What types of comparisons does Shakespeare use in this soliloquy?