

# Hamlet

Importance of the Ghost

# Opening Scene

The opening scene of the play is devised to create uncertainty and unease.

Done by using a variety of techniques of language and narrative structure (exposition)

# Language

Examine the language between the characters

Confusion of the guards

Discussion of the ghost

Horatio's scepticism (possibly connects him to the audience)

Discussion about the possible war (between the two ghost sightings) – revenge

# Ghost as dramatic device

**The discussion the ghost precedes the arrival of the ghost.  
(Build up the hype)**

**The ghost arrives mid-line:**

**BERNARDO**

***Last night of all,  
When yond same star that's westward from the pole  
Had made his course to illumine that part of heaven  
Where now it burns. Marcellus and myself,  
The bell then beating one, -***

# Ghost as dramatic device

Ghost fails to speak

Leaves then appears again after discussion of war (may suggest a connection between the two)

Ghost wears armour

Disappears as daylight arrives

Look at Horatio and Marcellus' language after the ghost leaves

Religious imagery

# Act 1 Scene 2

Introduction of Hamlet and his opinion of his father when he was alive.

Characterisation of Hamlet is quickly established

Passionate, religious, frustrated

Look at the pace of language in the scene after Horatio tells Hamlet about the ghost

What do you notice?

# Ac1 Scene 4

Ambiguity of Ghost is set up through Hamlet's speech:

Hamlet: Angels and ministers of grace defend us  
Be thou a spirit....

Examine the contrasts in the speech

The ghost 'beckons' Hamlet

Dialogue between characters supports the idea of ghosts ambiguous intentions.

# Act 1 Scene 5

Role of the ghost changes

Building tension – driving narrative

Ghost carries the majority of the dialogue

Carefully examine the images that are presented by the ghost – religious, corrupt, emotive

Ghost's language is designed to illicit a particular response from our unstable tragic hero.

However, Shakespeare's imagery is as much for the audience as it is for Hamlet.



# Father and Son

In this scene we, apparently, have a father instructing his son.

Socially, a son should never disobey his father.

Problems arise when Hamlet is unsure about the intentions of the ghost

What does ghost say about Gertrude? (is this important for Act 3 scene 4?)

# Description of Ghost's State

Are there links between this and Hamlet's decision to NOT kill Claudius?

# Reality

The ghost is real... but HOW real?

It has been seen by many people but only heard by one.

Does the initial characterisation of Hamlet cast any doubt on the ghost's validity.

'O my prophetic soul' Act 1 scene 5

Is Hamlet only hearing what he wants to hear?

# Act 2 Scene 2

Examine soliloquy 2

Look at how Hamlet berates himself and then casts doubt on the ghost's validity.

Look closely at the language and images.

# Act 3 scene 4

Ghost returns again

What difference is there this time?

How does Hamlet react towards the ghost?

Are there similarities and differences from the first sighting?

The action picks up pace from this point. The climax has been reached at this stage either through this scene or the previous one.