

Author's Foreword

Hamlet is considered by many to be Shakespeare's finest tragedy. Unfortunately its greatness lies in the complexity and subtlety of characterisation, language and imagery. This, combined with the dreaded language barrier can make what ought to be a rewarding challenge simply an arduous struggle. This resource sets out to help students discover these intricacies following a sound understanding of the text's events. These objectives are met through a variety of clear, direct and fun approaches.

- "Quote finders" promotes close reading of the text.
- "Guess the meaning" aims to break down the complex language barrier.
- "Who said it" draws attention to important quotations from key characters.
- "Summaries" provide further explanation of the text and pertinent discussion points
- "The Elsinore Times" and its activities make reading the play more fun and put the play into a recognisable and accessible format.

"He's loved of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgement but their eyes;
And where 'tis so th'offender's scourge is weighed,
But never the offence." Act 4, Scene 3.

With this quotation as evidence it is possible to assert a case for the validity of the newspapers. The political ingredient of the play is important to an understanding of character motives and plot. Hamlet is a popular figure and the play is not just set in Elsinore Castle. Recent performances by the RSC in particular have neglected this vital part of the play. Fortinbras' arrival provides hope to an otherwise tragic ending and deserves explanation. "The Elsinore Times" is a paper concerned with the politics and lives of Denmark's royal family as well as being full of activities. The issues provide stimulus for students, putting characters and events into a modern context makes understanding of the plot and relating to the characters less challenging for the students and hopefully more enjoyable for the teachers.

James Rilett, 2002.