

Tracing motifs and themes in *Hamlet*

Part I: As we read *Hamlet*, you will be developing the skill of tracing motifs and themes through the course of a work. You will select ONE of the following to trace. Then as we read find quotes [examples] of that motif in the play and copy the quotes down. List the Act, scene, and line number next to the quote [I:ii:123-124]. Next to that explain the significance or importance that motif may have at that point in the play. You may have to come back and explain the significance later, when it becomes more apparent. Do not merely paraphrase or summarize the action. Your comment should be analytical.

Grading Scale: 14-15 = A, 13 = B, 11-12 = C, 9-10 = D, <8 = F. (Extra = 1/2 pt. for any over 15)

Motifs to Trace:

1. Disease/body blemish
2. Rot (rotting foods and plants)
3. Poison
4. Clothes, cosmetics, makeup, etc.
5. Acting
6. War/violence
7. Condition of the world
8. Women's weakness

Part II: [Separate Grade-35 pts.] When you are done write a one page literary analysis in which you analyze this motif's importance to the play as a whole in regards to its symbolic meaning and one or more of the themes listed below. [Consider any or all of the following: Does it help in characterization? Develop an overriding theme? If yes, what is it? Create conflicts for the plot? Develop mood or tone? Create symbols? If yes, what do the symbols stand for?]

Key themes in *Hamlet* that your motif may be related to:

Internal Themes [related to this play alone]

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|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Revenge | 5. Mortality |
| 2. Corruption | 6. Appearance (Illusion vs. Reality) |
| 3. Doubt | 7. Madness (in both meanings) |
| 4. Disorder | 8. Frailty of Women |

Organize your essay as follows:

1. Intro:

- Write a topic sentence that identifies your motif and states the significance/purpose of the motif as it relates to either theme or symbolism.

2. Body:

- Trace development of motif from the beginning to the middle to the end.
- Give specific examples from throughout the play and discuss how the motif develops symbols or contributes to theme development over the course of the play. Does the motif change? If so, how? Why? Does it develop characterization? Contribute to conflict? Develop mood or tone?
- Use quotes that you collected as supporting evidence of your interpretation.
- Cite quotes correctly using MLA citation format.

3. Conclusion

- Do NOT merely restate the thesis/topic sentence
- Universalize the motif and relate it to students' lives or society in general
- Relate theme or symbolism of the play to persons or incidents from history or today's society.

Name _____

Citation	Examples from the play	Explanations

◆◆◆ NOW WRITE YOUR ESSAY ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER! ◆◆◆