

English 12  
Midterm study guide #3

Please see the first midterm guide for information about the format. Midterm guide #2 has a sampler of quotations from *Hamlet* for you to look over and think through as you prepare. This midterm guide gives you a long quotation and some questions for practice.

Please remember also that you have done a similar exercise in Q1 as you worked with long quotations in quizzes, for vocabulary, or for prepared in-class writings.

This section of the test should take you 20 minutes.

Here's an example, from *Hamlet*:

*Guildestern*: My lord, we were sent for.

*Hamlet*: I will tell you why. So shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen moult no feather. I have of late- but wherefore I know not- lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire- why, it appeareth no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me- no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

What is the importance of Guildestern's line above?

What does the prose arrangement (no line breaks) of Hamlet's speech suggest about it?

Interpret "So shall my anticipation prevent your discovery," demonstrating your understanding of the larger context of the speech.

Paraphrase "foregone all custom of exercises."

Paraphrase "it goes so heavily with my disposition."

Summarize the speech in 20 words or fewer.

Find and explain one use of metaphor.

Some sentimental sources quote Hamlet's "What a piece of work is man!" How is it that this statement in context might not actually be inspirational about man's capacities?

If you were playing the part of Hamlet, how would you deliver this speech? (Comment about tone and pace and any especially important words or ideas.)

Finally, explain the speech's importance to the theme of appearances and reality, and give another example of this theme from elsewhere in the text.