

Looking at parts of Hamlet's speech

Read this part of the speech with your group. Use the glossary to help.

Extract 1

To be, or not to be – that is the question:	<i>be</i> : live
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer	<i>nobler in the mind</i> : more admirable
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune	<i>The slings... fortune</i> : the injuries life gives us for no reason
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles	<i>take arms against</i> : fight
And by opposing, end them. To die, to sleep	<i>opposing</i> : fighting
No more – and by a sleep to say we end	
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks	<i>shocks</i> : bad surprises
That flesh is heir to.	<i>flesh is heir to</i> : the body must suffer

Then, with your group, decide on the best summary of your part of the speech (**a**, **b** or **c**).

- Hamlet describes life as hard work. We only put up with it because we are afraid of death, which we know nothing about.
- Hamlet decides that worrying and thinking too much stops us from being brave and taking the actions that we naturally want to take. We lose focus and our important plans are not completed.
- Hamlet is trying to decide if it is better to suffer the problems of a hard life, or to end the suffering by taking your own life. Death is like a sleep which ends all our human troubles.

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Extract 2

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,	<i>whips and scorns</i> : injuries
Who would fardels bear,	<i>fardels bear</i> : suffer big problems
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,	<i>grunt</i> : make a noise like a pig; <i>weary</i> : tiring
But that the dread of something after death,	<i>dread</i> : fear
The undiscovered country, from whose bourn	<i>bourn</i> : border
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,	<i>puzzles the will</i> : confuses us
And makes us rather bear those ills we have	<i>bear those ills</i> : suffer those troubles
than fly to others, that we know not of?	<i>fly to</i> : choose

Then, with your group, decide on the best summary of your part of the speech (**a**, **b** or **c**).

- Hamlet describes life as hard work. We only put up with it because we are afraid of death, which we know nothing about.
- Hamlet decides that worrying and thinking too much stops us from being brave and taking the actions that we naturally want to take. We lose focus and our important plans are not completed.
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Extract 3

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,	<i>conscience</i> : our thinking mind
And thus the native hue of resolution	our natural way of deciding
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,	<i>sicklied o'er with</i> : damaged by <i>the pale cast of thought</i> : the weakness of thinking too much
And enterprise of great pitch and moment	important projects
With this regard their currents turn awry	<i>their currents turn awry</i> have no direction
And lose the name of action	we don't act, and finish them

Then, with your group, decide on the best summary of your part of the speech (**a**, **b** or **c**).

- d.** Hamlet describes life as hard work. We only put up with it because we are afraid of death, which we know nothing about.
- e.** Hamlet decides that worrying and thinking too much stops us from being brave and taking the actions that we naturally want to take. We lose focus and our important plans are not completed.
- f.** Hamlet is trying to decide if it is better to suffer the problems of a hard life, or to end the suffering by taking your own life. Death is like a sleep which ends all our human troubles.