

# Hamlet

## Topic

The Shakespeare play Hamlet, ideas from the play, ghost stories

## Learning outcomes

- Practise strategies for watching and understanding a short video based on the Shakespeare play Hamlet.
- Use comprehension and speaking skills by discussing ideas from the play.
- Develop writing skills through a short story writing activity based on an element from the play.

## Age

(9–12 years) B1

## Time

85-100 minutes over two lessons

## Materials

Hamlet video, worksheet, answers, transcript, character flashcards and games:

<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/short-stories/hamlet>

## Introduction

In this lesson plan, which can be delivered as a 45-minute lesson or as shorter segments over three lessons, learners will be introduced to the Shakespeare play Hamlet through a short, animated video. They will watch the video and complete comprehension activities, and then will be guided to think about and discuss the ideas of 'revenge' and 'confusion' from the play. Finally, learners will develop their creative writing skills by planning and writing a ghost story.

## Procedure

Lesson one (35-50 minutes)

### 1. Warmer (5 minutes)

- Ask your learners if they have ever read a story or seen a film with ghosts in it. Was it scary or funny? Do they believe in ghosts?
- Tell the learners that they are going to watch a video called Hamlet, which is a story about a prince who sees the ghost of his father, who says he was murdered!

<b>2. Prediction (10 mins)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give learners the video worksheet and ask them to match the words and pictures (exercise 1). Check answers as a class. The answers are in <b>Appendix 1</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Watch and identify (10 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play the video and ask learners to match the characters and their names as they watch (exercise 2). Ask them to compare in pairs and then check as a class. The answers are in <b>Appendix 2</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Comprehension (10 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put learners into pairs.</li> <li>• Now ask learners to try to order the sentences (exercise 3). Tell them they may not remember everything but to work together to share what they do remember.</li> <li>• Play the video again and learners check their answers to exercise 3.</li> <li>• Ask them to compare with their partner, then go through as a class.</li> </ul> <p><b>Answers</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Hamlet's father dies and his mother gets married again to Claudius.</li> <li>2 The ghost of Hamlet's father tells Hamlet that Claudius killed him</li> <li>3 Hamlet asks some actors to perform a play showing a king poisoned like Hamlet's father.</li> <li>4 Claudius runs away from the play so Hamlet knows that Claudius killed his father.</li> <li>5 Claudius and Laertes make a plan to kill Hamlet.</li> <li>6 Hamlet and Laertes cut each other with the poisoned sword.</li> <li>7 Hamlet's mother drinks the poisoned drink.</li> <li>8 Hamlet kills Claudius with the poisoned sword and the poisoned drink.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At this stage, you might like to ask learners additional questions to help clarify their understanding or ask them to say which of their earlier predictions were correct.</li> </ul>
<b>5. True or false (10-15 minutes)</b>  OPTIONAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play the video again and ask learners to circle true or false (exercise 4) as they watch. Fast finishers can try to correct the false sentences.</li> </ul> <p><b>Answers</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Hamlet's mother gets married to his father's brother, Claudius. <b>T</b></li> <li>b) Hamlet sees the ghost of his <del>friend</del> <b>father F</b></li> <li>c) The ghost says that Claudius killed him with a <del>knife</del> <b>poison. F</b></li> <li>d) Hamlet is confused and doesn't know what to do. <b>T</b></li> <li>e) When Claudius watches the play, he is very <del>happy</del> <b>worried. F</b></li> <li>f) Hamlet knows that Claudius killed his father. <b>T</b></li> <li>g) Claudius and Laertes want to kill Hamlet. <b>T</b></li> <li>h) Hamlet and Laertes <del>dance</del> <b>fight. F</b></li> <li>i) Hamlet's mother <del>sleeps</del> <b>dies from the poisoned drink. F</b></li> <li>j) Finally, Hamlet knows he must stop Claudius. <b>T</b></li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask learners if they liked the story and why. Did they think it was funny, interesting, happy/sad, etc.?</li> <li>• If your learners need more support understanding the video, you might like to adapt the transcript of the video and get learners to act it out.</li> </ul>

## Lesson two (50 minutes)

**6. Discuss ideas from the play (10 mins)**

- Have the video ready to play at 0.32. You'll be focusing on 3 short sections.
 

**Note:** Two of the ideas in Hamlet are 'revenge' and 'confusion'. The depth to which you discuss the ideas and questions in this stage will depend on your learners' age and maturity, and you may need to provide more or less support.
- Play section 1: Hamlet sees the ghost (0.33-0.58). Ask your learners how they think Hamlet feels at this point. Does he know what to do or does he feel confused? Does he believe the ghost?
 

**Answer:** He feels confused. He doesn't believe the ghost
- Play section 2: Claudius watches the play and then runs away (1.39-1.53). Does Hamlet believe the ghost now? Does he do something, for example tell his mother about it, or try to punish Claudius like the ghost wants? Or does he still feel confused about what to do?
 

**Answer:** He believes the ghost but he doesn't know what to do
- Play section 3: Hamlet's mother dies and Laertes accuses Claudius (2.33-2.54). Is Hamlet confused about what to do now? What does he do?
 

**Answer:** He knows what to do. He kills the King with his sword.
- Ask your learners if they feel sorry for Hamlet. Do they think he should have done anything differently? Should he have decided what to do earlier?

**7. Writing prompts (10 mins)**

- Tell your learners they are going to write a ghost story! Ask your learners what they think makes a good ghost story. Elicit ideas such as:
  - a spooky setting (e.g. an empty old house, a graveyard)
  - the atmosphere (e.g. it is dark, raining, cold, quiet)
  - the characters (e.g. who they are; what they are like; are they brave, frightened, loyal?).
- If your learners need prompting for ideas, you could show them this story-starter clip: <https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/teachers-tv-writing-a-ghost-story-cave-6085205>
- Explain that the story needs to follow a simple plan. Discuss the following stages and make notes on the board. Brainstorm lots of ideas for each stage:
- Tell learners to try to include lots of description, especially at the beginning, and to try to use lots of adjectives and adverbs to make the writing more interesting.
- Ask what does the setting (house, graveyard, etc.) look like? What time of day and weather is it? How are the characters feeling? What sounds can they hear? Are there any smells?
- Brainstorm ideas and vocabulary on the board.

**8. Story plan (15 minutes)**

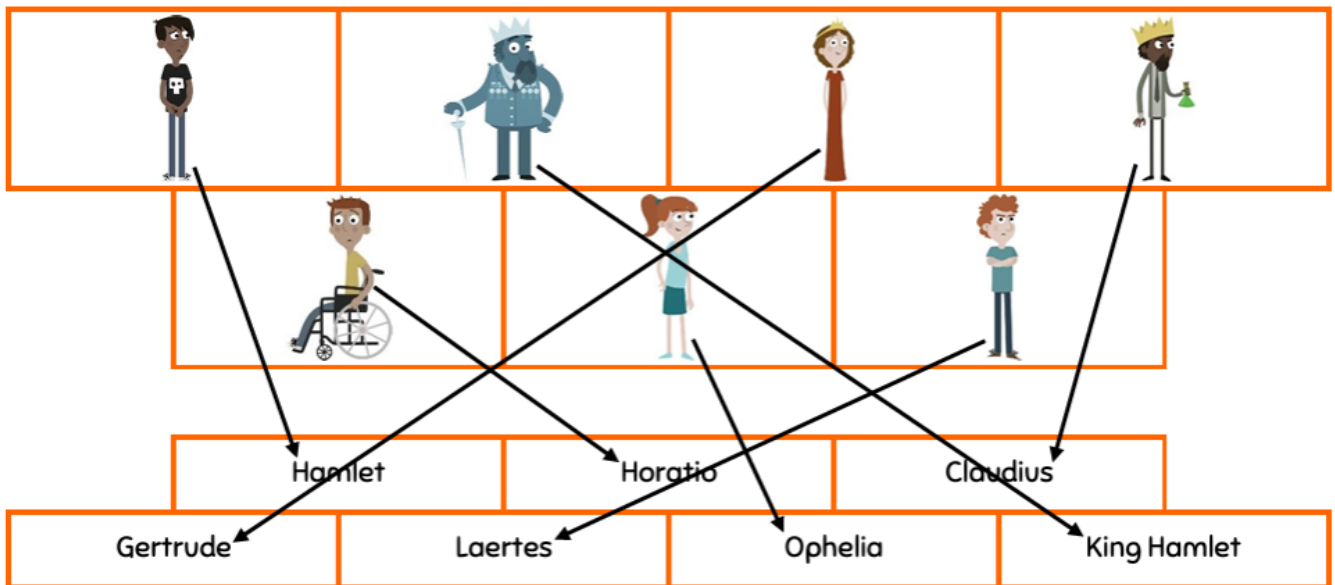
- Explain that the story needs to follow a simple plan. Discuss the following stages and make notes on the board. Brainstorm lots of ideas for each stage:
  1. **start:** where the characters are, what they are doing, why they are there

	<p>2. <b>the build-up:</b> something spooky happens that starts to scare the characters, e.g. a door bangs open and shut (is it the wind?), they hear a strange noise (perhaps it's just a cat?), they see a ghostly figure in a photo they have taken (maybe their phone isn't working properly?)</p> <p>3. <b>the problem:</b> something frightening happens to the characters and they have to decide what to do, e.g. a ghost locks them in a room and starts coming towards them, the main character turns round and their friend has disappeared, an invisible hand writes 'help me' on the wall</p> <p>4. the ending: how do the characters resolve the problem or get out of the situation (or not!)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put learners into pairs to plan their story. Monitor and feed in useful vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<b>9. Homework set up (15 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With their partner learners write the first paragraph of their story in their notebook.</li> <li>• Ask learners to use their notes to complete the story for homework.</li> </ul>
<b>Further activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the following lesson ask learners to share their stories and ask the class to vote for their favourite.</li> <li>• Would you like to extend your learners' work with Hamlet? Try one of our suggested further activities here:  <a href="https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/shakespeare-extension-activities-kids">https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/shakespeare-extension-activities-kids</a> </li> </ul>

Appendix 1 – Worksheet activity one answers

					
fight	marry	thirsty	drink	poison	play
					
sword	cut	ghost	worried	angry	confused

Appendix 2 - Worksheet activity two answers



Contributed by

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