

Words From Shakespeare's Hamlet

Avocabo Word List 81

AMBLE, BESMIRCH, COVENANT, DISMAL, DIVULGE, GAMBOL, HARROW, IMPERIOUS, IMPORTUNATE, IMPOTENCE, PALPABLE, PERNICIOUS, PESTILENT, PORTENTOUS, REMISS, REPUGNANT, SHREWDLY, TEMPERANCE, TRADUCE, USURP, WANTON

William Shakespeare's Hamlet dramatizes the tragic story of the young Prince of Denmark, Hamlet, upon learning of his father's murder. The play revolves around Hamlet's desire to kill his uncle Claudius, the brother of the dead king, for murdering his father (and marrying his mother soon after to become king). Hamlet experiences a wide range of emotions throughout the play, and displays much erratic behaviour. The play vividly portrays both true and feigned madness – from overwhelming grief to boiling rage – and explores themes of betrayal, revenge, suicide, and moral corruption. Exact dates are unknown, but scholars agree that Shakespeare published Hamlet between 1601 and 1603. Many believe that Hamlet is the best of Shakespeare's work, and the perfect play. Hamlet is Shakespeare's longest play and among the most powerful and influential tragedies in the English language, with a story capable of "seemingly endless retelling and adaptation by others."



Exercise 81-1: Definitions Place each list word next to the corresponding definition (21 marks)

1. _____ *n. an agreement or contract*
2. _____ *v. to skip or frolic playfully n. a playful skip or run*
3. _____ *adj. able to be touch or felt; tangible*
4. _____ *v. to reveal, disclose; make public*
5. _____ *v. to seize or assume power wrongfully*
6. _____ *adv. severely, sharply; cleverly wittily*
7. _____ *adj. 1. destructive to life; deadly 2. harmful morally destructive; 2. troublesome*
8. _____ *adj. arrogant and domineering*
9. _____ *v. to walk or move at a slow, easy pace*
10. _____ *n. self-control, calm behaviour, moderation (esp. in eating/ drinking)*
11. _____ *adj. negligent; lacking care or attention to duty*
12. _____ *adj. destructive; having a harmful effect (esp. in a harmful way)*
13. _____ *adj. unrestrained, undisciplined 2. promiscuous v. to behave in a sexually immodest or promiscuous way n. a sexually immodest or promiscuous woman*
14. _____ *v. to disturb or distress greatly*
15. _____ *v. to damage the reputation of someone of something in the opinion of others; to dirty of make discoloured*
16. _____ *n. powerlessness, helplessness*
17. _____ *adj. depressing; dreary, miserable*
18. _____ *adj. 1. ominous; threatening 2. done in a pompously or overly solemn manner*

19. _____ *adj.* 1. *extremely distasteful* 2. *opposing, resisting, refusing*

20. _____ *adj.* *pressing; persistent (esp. to the point of annoyance)*

21. _____ *v.* *speak badly of or tell lies about (someone) so as to damage their reputation*

Exercise 81-2: Fill in the blanks *Place the appropriate list word in the following lines from Hamlet (a synonym is provided as a hint) (21 marks)*

1. "A hit, a very _____ (*tangible*) hit." - Osric (5.2.257)

2. "_____ (*overbearing*) Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay" - Hamlet (5.1.180)

3. "And I the matter will re-word; which madness / Would _____ (*frolic*) from." - Hamlet (3.4.160)

4. "And wager on your heads: he, being _____ (*careless*), / Most generous and free from all contriving" - Claudius (4.7.133)

5. "And wants not buzzers to infect his ear / With _____ (*detrimental*) speeches of his father's death" - Claudius (4.5.90)

6. "What art thou that _____ 'st (*take over*) this time of night" - Horatio (1.4.46)

7. "Had he been vanquisher, as, by the same _____ (*contract*)" - Horatio (1.1.93)

8. "Most like. It _____ (*distresses*) me with fear and wonder" - Horatio (1.1.44)

9. "And now no soil nor cautel doth _____ (*tarnish*)" - Laertes (1.3.15)

10. "Well may it sort that this _____ (*ominous*) figure / Comes armed through our watch" - Bernardo (1.1.109)

11. "The air bites _____ (*sharply*). It is very cold." - Hamlet (1.4.1)

12. "Makes us _____ (*besmirch*) and taxed of other nations." - Hamlet (1.4.18)

13. "O most _____ (*harmful*) woman!" - Hamlet (1.5.105)

14. "But, sir, such _____ (*unrestrained*), wild, and usual slips" - Polonius (2.1.22)

15. "That so his sickness, age, and _____ (*helplessness*)" - Voltimand (2.2.66)

16. "To keep it from _____ (*becoming disclosed*) let it feed" - Claudius (4.1.22)

17. "With heraldy more _____ (*gloomy*); head to foot" - Hamlet (2.2.454)

18. "_____ (*refusing*) to command. Unequal matched" - First Player (2.2.469)

19. "You jig and _____ (*saunter*), and you lisp" - Hamlet (3.1.146)

20. "You must acquire and beget a _____ (*self control*) that may give it smoothness" (3.2.7) Hamlet

21. "She is _____ (*persistent*), indeed distract." - Gentleman (4.5.2)

Exercise 81-3: Antonyms *Multiple Choice - Circle the antonym to the italicized list word (10 marks)*

1. Why are we compelled to *divulge* information on social media?

- a) reveal b) remove c) conceal

2. Sixers roar back from *dismal* first half

- a) hopeful b) dreary c) intriguing

3. Detentions display UN's *impotence* in Ethiopia

- a) helpfulness b) helplessness c) power

4. Stop *wanton* tree cutting

- a) excessive b) righteous c) uncontrolled

5. George Osborne has said that he considers tax avoidance to be morally *repugnant*

- a) tasteful b) offensive c) repellent

6. The energy was *palpable* as many of these young people looked back at their lives a year ago and reflected on how far they had come

- a) positive b) intangible c) tangible

7. He would not answer specific questions and said the Times-Union was trying to “*besmirch*” his character

- a) tarnish b) boost c) manipulate

8. It can happen anywhere, but dinosaur poaching is especially persistent and *pernicious* in China and Mongolia

- a) beneficial b) widespread c) destructive

9. Just how *pestilent* the problem is depends on the nation

- a) serious b) detrimental c) favourable

10. The BBC faced criticism that its royal wedding coverage was overly *portentous* and reverential

- a) pompous b) casual c) modest

Exercise 81-4: Parts of Speech Write the correct variant of the list word in the form specified (6 marks)

1. Adjective form of harrow: _____

2. Noun form of avouch: _____

3. Adjective form of shrewdly: _____

4. Noun form of pernicious: _____

5. Noun form of divulge: _____

6. Noun form of palpable: _____

Exercise 81-5: Etymologies Provide the list word described by its etymology (9 marks)

1. _____ From medieval Latin *dies mali* meaning ‘evil days’

2. _____ From Latin *amber* meaning ‘to walk’

3. _____ From Latin *remissus* meaning ‘slackened’

4. _____ From Latin *pernicies* meaning ‘ruin’

5. _____ From Old English *wan-* meaning ‘badly’ and *togen* meaning trained

6. _____ From Old French *covenir* meaning ‘agree’

7. _____ via French from Italian *gambata* ‘trip up,’ from *gamba* ‘leg.’

8. _____ From Latin *divulgare*, from *di-* ‘widely’ + *vulgare* ‘publish’ (from *vulgus* ‘common people’)

9. _____ From Latin *pestilens* ‘unhealthy, destructive,’ from *pestis* ‘plague.’

Hamlet Inspired Novel Titles

Not only has Hamlet provided the English language with many oft-quoted phrases, it has been the inspiration for numerous novel titles. Here is a sampling:

- Richard Matheson: *What Dreams May Come*
- Edith Wharton: *The Glimpses of the Moon*
- David Foster Wallace: *Infinite Jest*
- Peter Spence: *To the Manor Born*
- Steven Berkoff: *I Am Hamlet (play)*
- Monica Dickens: *The Winds of Heaven*
- Anthony Powell: *Infants of the Spring*
- Philip K. Dick: *Time Out of Joint*
- Nigel Balchin: *Kings of Infinite Space*
- Isaac Asimov: *The Gods Themselves*
- Aldous Huxley: *Mortal Coils*
- Graham Greene: *The Name of Action*
- Agatha Christie: *The Mousetrap (play)*
- Georgette Heyer: *No Wind of Blame*
- Tom Stoppard: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead (play)*