NOTE: Don’t waste time learning off what act and scene each quote is from, it won’t gain you any extra marks in the exam. Just have a general sense of where they belong chronologically eg ‘In the nunnery scene…’ **or** ‘In the prayer scene…’ **or** ‘In the gravedigger’s scene…’

**Act 1, scene 2** – Claudius conducts affairs of state, begs Hamlet not to be so melancholy, and Gertrude asks him to stay with them instead of returning to college.

1. “*A little more than kin and less than kind*” – Hamlet, aside. Reveals disgust at his new ‘relationship’ to his uncle/step-father Claudius
2. “*I have that within me which passes show/ these but the trappings and the suits of woe*” – Hamlet to Gertrude. Here Hamlet distinguishes between genuine grief (his own) and false grief (Gertrude/Claudius).
3. **“***I shall in all my best obey you, madam***”**– Hamlet to Gertrude**.**He deliberately snubs Claudius, and reluctantly obeys his mother.
4. **“***that the Everlasting had not fixed/ His canon against self-slaughter***” –**Hamlet He is so depressed that he contemplates suicide, but won’t go through with it because it’s a sin.
5. **“***Frailty, thy name is woman***”**– Hamlet, soliloquy. His opinion of women has plummeted following his mother’s hasty remarriage.
6. *“O most wicked speed, to post/ With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!/ It is not nor it cannot come to good/ But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue***” –**Hamlet, soliloquy. He feels constrained not to complain, but is disgusted by their relationship. The marriage of such close relatives would have been regarded as incest in Shakespearean times. It is doubly revolting because they don’t even wait until Hamlet’s Snr’s body is cold in the grave, thus showing a profound lack of respect for his memory.
7. *“I shall not look upon his like again”***–**Hamlet to Horatio. Hamlet’s admiration for his father is clear. Hamlet believes that he is irreplaceable. Ironic comment because he will meet his father again (as a ghost) in the very next scene!
8. *“I doubt some foul play…/Foul deeds will rise/ Though all the earth o’erwhelm them to men’s eyes”***–**Hamlet. The appearance of his father’s ghost makes him suspicious, but he is confident that he will discover the truth.

**Act 1, scene 4** – Hamlet waits in darkness for the ghost to appear, whilst the sounds of revelry from Claudius’ court ring in the background.

1. “*oft it chances in particular men/ the stamp of one defect/ his virtues else be they as pure as grace/ shall in the general censure take corruption/ from that particular fault*” – Hamlet’s soliloquy revealing his intellectual side commenting on the reputation of Danes for being drunkards, he notes that men may be blessed with many gifts, abilities and virtues, but their one fault may be their downfall. A small element of evil can corrupt an otherwise virtuous individual.

**Act 1, scene 5** – Hamlet meets his father’s ghost and learns the truth.

1. “*Haste me to know it, that I with wings as swift/ As meditation or the thoughts of love/ May sweep to my revenge*” – Hamlet to the ghost. Hamlet wants to know the details of the crime so he can immediately seek revenge.
2. “*From the table of my memory/ I’ll wipe away all trivial fond records…/And thy commandment all alone shall live/ Within the book and volume of my brain*” He swears to erase everything from his memory except this urgent demand for revenge
3. “*O most pernicious woman/ O villain, villain, smiling damned villain!…/ One may smile, and smile and be a villain/ At least I am sure it may be so inDenmark*” – Hamlet to himself He equally blames his mother (for her betrayal) and Claudius (for the crime) and reiterates an idea from Marcellus earlier on that “*something is rotten in the state of Denmark”.*
4. “*No, you will reveal it*” – Hamlet to Horatio. At first he refuses to tell his best friend, Horatio, what he has discovered. Although he quickly changes his mind, this reveals the beginnings of his paranoia.
5. “*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio/ Then are dreamt of in your philosophy*” –Hamlet to Horatio. The supernatural atmosphere increases as Hamlet maintains that science and rationality cannot explain everything in the universe.
6. “*The time is out of joint. O cursed spite/ That ever I was born to set it right*!” He comments that the state of Denmark has been afflicted with a terrible sickness, and laments the fact that it is his fate/destiny to find the cure.

**Act 2, scene 2** – Claudius sends Rosencrantz & Guildenstern to discover the cause of Hamlet’s madness; Hamlet fobs them off. They introduce a group of players to cheer him up, and he comes up with a plan to prove Claudius’ guilt.

1. “*It appeareth nothing to me but a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours*”. Hamlet to Rosencrantz & Guildenstern, revealing his disillusionment with the world.
2. “*My uncle-father, and aunt-mother, are deceived…/ I am but mad north-north-west*” – Hamlet to Ros & Guild. He reveals that he is only a little/only occasionally mad to his old school friends.
3. “*Oh what a rogue and peasant slave am I…/ Am I a coward…/I am pigeon-livered and lack gall/ To make oppression bitter*” – Hamlet soliloquy. Hamlet berates himself, having seen the passion of the players, for not acting on his own passionate desire for revenge.
4. “*The spirit that I have seen/ May be a devil…/I’ll have grounds/More relative than this*” – Hamlet soliloquy. He reveals part of the reason for his hesitancy (afraid to trust the ghost’s word), and resolves to have firmer evidence of his uncle’s guilt before he inflicts punishment.
5. “*the play’s the thing/ wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the king*” – Hamlet. He decides that the best way to test Claudius’ guilt is to make him face his own crime in the form of a play, and then watch for his reaction.

**Act 3, scene 1** – the ‘nunnery scene’ opens with a meditation on life and death. Ophelia has been sent by Polonius/Claudius to speak to Hamlet so that they can test the theory that his madness is due to unrequited love. Hamlet is cruel and cynical towards her, either (a) because he realises she’s in league with Polonius/Claudius or (b) because he’s so disgusted with the idea of love/marriage following his mother’s betrayal of his father’s memory.

1. “*To be or not to be, that is the question/ Whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer/ The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune/ Or to take arms against a sea of troubles/ And by opposing, end them*” –Hamlet wonders which is preferable, life or death. At this point he sees life as nothing more than pain and suffering. Later in this speech he suggests that all that stops us from killing ourselves is the fear of the unknown – “*the dread of something after death”*
2. “*Thus conscience does make cowards of us all/ And thus the native hue of resolution/ Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought/ And enterprises of great pitch and moment/ With this regard their currents turn awry/ And lose the name of action*” – Hamlet soliloquy. The opening sentence can mean two things. First, that reflecting on the implications of an action can make us afraid of performing it (as he’s afraid of killing Claudius) or secondly, that our moral voice makes us fear doing what we know is morally wrong (committing murder). Our natural hot blooded reaction is cooled by over-analysing the issue.
3. “*No, not I, I never gave you aught*” – Hamlet to Ophelia as she attempts to return gifts that he gave her in the past. His response may suggest that he views this ‘new’ Ophelia as a stranger. His view of women has certainly suffered.
4. “*I did love you once*” –  Hamlet to Ophelia “*Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so*” – Ophelia to Hamlet “*You should not have believed me…I loved you not*” –  Hamlet to Ophelia  “*I was the more deceived*” – Ophelia to Hamlet “*Get thee to a nunnery…if thou dost marry, I’ll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow*” Hamlet to Ophelia. Hamlets’ bitterness towards women generally, and towards his ex-lover Ophelia specifically is revealed in this scene.  He ridicules her rejection of him, suggesting she is now only fit for a nunnery, where she can guard her virginity forever! It has been suggested that Hamlet knows that her father is hiding behind the arras. he may also suspect sudden change of heart was motivated by Polonius’ accusation that he only wanted her so he could steal her virginity and he is insulted that she thought so little of him.
5. “*If thou wilt marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them*” – Hamlet to Ophelia, offering a further critique of women.

**Act 3, scene 2** – Hamlet tests and confirms Claudius’ guilt with the performance of “The Murder of Gonzago”. Ros & Guild*and*Polonius deliver the message that Gertrude wants to see him in her chamber.

1. “*Is this a prologue…?* – Hamlet to Ophelia “*’Tis brief my Lord*” – Ophelia to Hamlet  “*As woman’s love*” – Hamlet to Ophelia. His obsession with his mother’s “*o’er hasty marriage*” is affecting his view of all women, and making him particularly cruel to Ophelia.
2. “*Lady shall I lie in your lap?”….. “did you think I meant country matters?” “That’s a fair thought to lie between maid’s legs*” Hamlet to Ophelia. He engages in sexual inuendo, suggesting that she, not he, is the one fixated on sex. Again, he is probably still hurt that she thought his only interest in her was sexual and broke off their relationship as a result.
3. “*Your majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not*” Hamlet during the play.
4. “*He poisons him I’ th’ garden for his estate…You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago’s wife*” – Hamlet to Claudius. Hamlet goads Claudius into a reaction, commenting repeatedly on the performance of the play (within a play) ‘the murder of Gonzago’. However, he makes a mistake when he makes the murderer in the play the King’s nephew. The members in the court who are watching the play don’t know that Claudius killed his brother, so they are likely to interpret this as Hamlet threatening to kill his uncle Claudius.
5. “*My wit’s deceased*” “*Sir, I lack advancement” “Do you think* *I am easier to be played on than a pipe*?”. Hamlet no longer views Rosencrantz & Guildenstern as friends, and refuses to give them a straight answer when they again try to probe the reasons for his madness/melancholy.
6. “*Let me be cruel, not unnatural; I will speak daggers to her, but use none*”  Hamlet in soliloquy resolves not to put his feelings into action – he has promised the ghost of his father that he won’t punish Gertrude for Claudius’ crime. We are still unclear as to whether or not Gertrude was involved in his father’s murder but Hamlet seems convinced that she was.

**Act 3, scene 3** – the prayer scene

1. “*Why this is hire and salary, not revenge*” – Hamlet soliloquy. He decides that if he kills Claudius at prayer, he’ll be acting like nothing more than a hired assassin. If Claudius goes to heaven, his punishment will be nought and Hamlet’s revenge will be incomplete.
2. “*Then trip him that his heels may kick at heaven/ And that his soul may be as damned and black/ As hell whereto he goes*” ” – Hamlet soliloquy. He resolves to wait until he is certain that Claudius will go to hell, by killing him when he’s committing a sin.

**Act 3, scene 4** – Hamlet’s meeting with Gertrude, where he accidentally kills Polonius.

1. “*Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended*” – Gertrude to Hamlet
2. “*Mother, you have my father much offended*” – Hamlet to Gertrude. Hamlet refuses to allow his mother to lecture him on correct behaviour.
3. “*Have you forgot me?”* – Gertrude
4. “*You are the queen, your husband’s brother’s wife/ And would it were not so, you are my mother*” – Hamlet. Gertrude, shocked by his lack of respect, asks if he has forgotten that he is speaking to his mother. Hamlet’s disgust springs from the religious belief that the marriage of such close relatives as Gertrude and Claudius is wrong and incestuous.
5. “*A bloody deed – almost as bad, good mother/ As kill a king and marry with his brother*” – Hamlet to Gertrude. Hamlet’s response to his crime is cold and unemotional. He is so obsessed with the crimes of his uncle and mother, that he feels his own (he has just killed Polonius) pale into insignificance. He seems to think that his mother was involved in (or had previous knowledge of) the plot to kill his father Hamlet Snr. (Note: her response suggests she knew nothing of it)
6. “*Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell! / I took thee for thy better*”. Hamlet’s major emotion following his murder of Polonius is disappointment because he hoped it was Claudius hiding behind the arras. He seems unaffected by the fact that he has murdered a (largely) innocent man, and suggests that Polonius got what he deserved for being a meddlesome fool!
7. “*Have you eyes? You cannot call it love, for at your age/ The hey day in the blood is tame, it’s humble/ And waits upon the judgement, and what judgement/ Would step from this to this*?”. Hamlet forces his mother to look at two portraits of her lovers– one of his father, one of Claudius. He cannot understand how she could be satisfied with the pathetic replacement she has found.
8. “*A murderer & a villain…a vice of kings/ A cutpurse of the empire & the rule*”. Hamlet’s assessment of Claudius’ character, designed to torture his mother with guilt. (Cutpurse = Thief)
9. “*Do you see nothing there*?”. Hamlet is amazed that Gertrude cannot see the ghost. She becomes convinced that he is truly mad.
10. “*Confess yourself to heaven. Repent what’s past, avoid what is to come*”. Hamlet begs his mother to repent her sins. He wants to save her soul proving he still loves her.
11. “*For this same lord I do repent; but heaven hath pleased it so/ To punish me with this, and this with me/ That I must be their scourge and minister*”. Hamlet realises that he will eventually be punished for his crime, but he is also convinced that it is the will of the Gods that he be their instrument of vengeance and punishment. (Polonius’ deceit has been punished by Hamlet.) He no longer worries what is right and wrong – he has convinced himself that getting revenge is what God wants him to do.
12. “*I essentially am not in madness/ But mad in craft*”. Hamlet reveals to his mother that his madness is nothing more than an act, but warns her not to reveal this fact to her husband Claudius.
13. “*I’ll lug the guts into the neighbour room*”. Hamlet’s lack of respect for the dead makes us wonder if his remorse was genuine.
14. **Act 4, scene 2** – Hamlet describes his old school friends as sponges, that soak up everything the King says. However, in the end, they will be cast aside: “*When he needs what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you, and sponge, you shall be dry again*”

**Act 4, scene 3** – Claudius quizzes Hamlet about the whereabouts of Polonius’ body and tells him he is to be sent toEngland‘*for his own safety’*, as there he can avoid punishment for the crime he has committed.

1. “*In heaven. Send hither to see. If your messenger find him not there, seek him i’ th’ other place yourself*”. It is threatening comments like this that convince Claudius that Hamlet is a threat to him and must be disposed of.

**Act 4, scene** **4** – Hamlet meets a Norwegian officer, who tells him of Fortinbras’ expedition to capture a small patch of land fromPoland. Hamlet then compares himself unfavourably to Fortinbras (although Shakespeare doesn’t necessarily agree – he seems to be ridiculing Fortinbras’ meagre justification for waging war).

1. “*What is a man/ If his chief good and market of his time/ Be but to sleep and feed? A beast no more….Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means to do it… Rightly to be great/ Is not to stir without great argument/ But greatly to find quarrel in a straw/When honour’s at the stake/ How stand I then/ That have a father killed, a mother stained/ Excitements of my reason and my blood/ And let all sleep? While to my shame I see/ The imminent death of twenty thousand men/ That for a fantasy or trick of fame/ Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot/ Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause*”

He knows that there is more to life than serving one’s bodily desires, otherwise we are no better than animals. He realises that he has no excuse for his inaction. He argues that the true sign of greatness can be seen in a man (like Fortinbras) who will fight over a trifle when his honour is at stake. By comparison, Hamlet sees his own inaction, when he has every reason to seek revenge, as pathetic. He is ashamed. However, the audience may be less sure of the righteousness of Fortinbras’ actions – he is, after all, causing the imminent death of 20,000 men for ‘a fantasy or a trick of fame’.

1. “*O from this time forth/ My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth*”. Hearing of Fortinbras’ leads to a further resolution to get revenge for once & for all.

**Act 4, scene 6** – we hear from Horatio that Hamlet has escaped and is returning toDenmark.

**Act 4, scene 7** – Claudius convinces Laertes that Hamlet killed his father, and devises a plan to get rid of him in a faux fencing match.

**Act 5, scene 1** – the graveyard scene, where Hamlet muses on the nature of life and death, accidentally comes across Ophelia’s funeral, and fights with Laertes.

1. “*That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once…This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass now o’er-reaches; one that would circumvent God*”. Hamlet muses on the idea that even those who attempt to by-pass God’s law and morality, cannot escape the inevitability of death.
2. “*Get you to my lady’s chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favour she must come*”. However she paints her face, a lady will end up looking no more attractive than this skull (the irony of this thought lies in his ignorance of the fact that the grave is being dug for Ophelia). He again muses on the pointlessness of our worldly concerns, as none of us can avoid death. He later muses that many great leaders, like Alexander and Caesar, also ended up in the grave, just as the king, Claudius enters.
3. “*What is he whose grief bears such an empha*sis?”.  Again, Hamlet feels offended by what he sees as false and over the top protestations of grief.
4. “*I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers/ Could not with all their quantity of love/ Make up the sum*” Hamlet feels the nature and quality of his love was more powerful than Laertes’. It is possible that his attack on Laertes is motivated by utter shock that Ophelia is dead and a combination of guilt and rage when Leartes implies that Hamlet may be partially to blame. He cannot bear the thought that he may have contributed to the death of this woman he loved and so lashes out.

**Act 5, scene 2** – the fencing match between Hamlet and Laertes, which ultimately leads to the completion of Hamlet’s revenge, and the death of all of the major characters in the play.

1. “*There’s a divinity that shapes our ends/ Rough-hew them how we will*”. He now believes in a divine purpose behind everything that human beings do, in the idea that (even if we don’t know it at the time) there is a grand pattern. All of his recent good luck appears to Hamlet as proof that he has been saved from death for a greater purpose – to get revenge on Claudius and thus serve him with the divine justice he deserves for his crimes.
2. “*He should those bearers put to sudden death/ not shriving-time allowed*” Hamlet’s deceitful replacement of Claudius’ letter to the King of England with one of his own ordering the execution of Ros. & Guild, and his lack of remorse at their deaths reveals how morally tainted he has become in the course of the play by the deception and betrayal that surrounds him.
3. “*They are nor near my conscience, their defeat/ Does by their own insinuation grow*” Hamlet feels that they have only got what they deserved for getting mixed up with a villain like Claudius. He assumes that they knew about the plot to have him killed.
4. “*He that hath killed my king, and whored my mother/ Popped in between th’ election and my hopes/ Thrown out his angle for my proper life*” This is a summary of all of Hamlet’s grievances with Claudius – he killed his father, turned his mother into a slut, prevented Hamlet from gaining the throne, and then attempted to have him killed.
5. “*I am very sorry, good Horatio/ That to Laertes I forgot myself/ For by the image of my cause I see/ The portraiture of his*”. Hamlet regrets his row with Laertes, because he realises that Laertes has a just reason for seeking vengence, and that in thus they are very much alike.
6. “*I will win for him if I can; if not, I will gain nothing but my shame and the odd hits*”. Hamlet casually accepts the invitation to a duel, as though he has nothing to lose
7. “*Thou wouldst not think how ill’s here about my heart… a kind of gaingiving as would perhaps trouble a woman*”. He is filled with a sense of foreboding, his spirit is troubled, but he suspects this is no more than womanly cowardice and superstition.
8. “*If it be now ‘tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come*”. Hamlet has lost all fear of death – he believes that if his time has come, there is nothing he can do about it. (Que sera, sera, whatever will be will be).
9. “*Give me your pardon sir, I have done you wrong…What I have done…I here proclaim was madness*”. Hamlet asks Laertes to forgive him, he did not knowingly kill his father.
10. “*How does the queen?…O villainy. Ho, let the door be locked…The point envenomed too?/ Then venom to thy work*.” *Hamlet stabs the King, then forces him to drink poison.*His mother’s death finally provokes Hamlet to action. It is fitting that Claudius is killed with the weapons he himself poisoned in order to kill Hamlet.
11. “*Heaven make thee free of it*” Hamlet offers Laertes forgiveness as he lies dying.
12. “*If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart/ Absent thee from felicity awhile/ And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain/ To tell my story*”. Hamlet begs Horatio on his deathbed to tell the truth to the world and thus protect his memory beyond the grave.
13. “*I do prophesy th’ election lights/ On Fortinbras. He has my dying voice…the rest is silence*”. Hamlet’s final words reveal his noble concern for the future of the kingdom, even as he lies dying.
14. After his death great tributes are paid to him by both Horatio & Fortinbras. Horatio says “goodnight sweet prince and flights of angels sing thee to thy rest” and Fortinbras comments “*Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage*; *For* *he* was likely, *had he been put* on, To *have proved most royal*“.

No more can be said of Hamlet – the rest is silence.