# Kentucky Shakespeare Presents

# Hamlet - Spring Tour

Study Guide

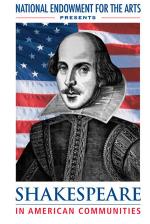
Grades 6th - 12th



Hear it. See it. Do it!











Dear Educator.

Thank you for choosing Kentucky Shakespeare to enrich your students' lives with Art Education! We know that the arts are essential to a child's educational experience and development. It is our object to keep the arts alive and thriving in our schools and communities.

This comprehensive Study Guide includes essential background information on the Bard and his life, his written works, pre/post performance activities, and a list of applicable Academic Standards that are met with this performance.

While giving additional arts related experiences, these teacher-led activities are intended to broaden students' understanding of the play as well as how Shakespeare can relate to our own lives. We hope that you and your students enjoy this 90 minute performance

Please contact us with any questions or need for further assistance. Thank you for supporting the Commonwealth's largest in-school arts provider and the United States' oldest, free Shakespeare festival!

All Our Best to You.

Kyle Ware Director of Education Hannah Pruitt Education Manager



### **Kentucky Shakespeare**

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#### **Academic Standards**

TH:RE7.1.6-8, TH:RE8.1.6-8, TH:RE9.1.6-8, TH:CN10.1.6-8, TH:CN11.1.6-8, TH:CN11.2.6-8, TH:RE7.1.I-III, TH:RE8.1.I-III, TH:RE9.1.I-III, CN10.1.I-III, TH:CN11.1.I-III

RL.6.3, RI.6.4, SL.6.1B, RL.6.7, RL.7.3, RL.7.4, RL.7.5, SL.7.1C, RL.8.3, RL.8.4, RL.9-10.3, SL.9-10.1C, SL.9-10.1D, RL.9-10.4, RL.9-10.6, RL.9-10.1, RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.4, RL.11-12.7



# **Spring Tour Synopsis**

In this 90-minute production of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, our professional actors are able to create a rapport with your students in order to keep Shakespeare relevant and accessible. It is a wonderful opportunity for Shakespeare-lovers and those not as well acquainted to experience the Bard's language and see a live performance of his words. This tour emphasizes conflict resolution, interpersonal relationships, and Shakespeare's universal themes.

How can we both make this be the most efficient and successful performance?

- We ask that you create an environment conducive to a positive interaction with your students including an **open space** for our Artist Educators to perform and seating students on bleachers or to where they can easily see the performance.
- For your use, we have provided these activities for both **pre- and post-workshop discussion**. They are a fun and an engaging way to enhance learning and allow students to make the most of their arts experience with us.
- It is of utmost importance not only to your students but to our Artist Educators as well that there are **adult school staff members present in the room** throughout the workshop. Students tend to have less distractions and are more encouraged to engage in the performance with familiar adult presences in the room.

# William Shakespeare (April 23, 1564 - April 23, 1616)

### His Life

- Born and raised in Stratford-upon-Avon
- Attended grammar school in central Stratford where he learned Latin, grammar, and literature
- Married Anne Hathaway at the age of 18 and had three children: Susanna and twins Hamnet and Judith
- Between 1585 and 1592, he began a successful career in London as an actor, writer, and part owner of the playing company the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later known as the King's Men
- Appears to have retired to Stratford around 1613, where he died three years later

#### His Works

- An English poet and playwright widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's preeminent dramatist
- Often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon" (or simply "The Bard")
- His surviving works consist 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several poems
- Plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more than those of any other playwright
- Few records of his private life survive and there has been considerable speculation about his religious beliefs and whether the works attributed to him were written by others
- Produced most of his known work between 1590 and 1613
- Early plays were comedies and histories, genres he raised to the peak of style and artistry
- Next, he wrote primarily tragedies until about 1608, including *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*
- Lastly, he wrote tragicomedies also known as romances and collaborated with other playwrights
- In 1623, two of his former theatrical colleagues published the First Folio, a collected edition of his dramatic works that included all but two of the plays now recognized as Shakespeare's
- Reputation did not rise to its present heights until the nineteenth century



William Shakespeare



The Original Globe Theatre circa 1612

# Shakespeare's Three Styles of Plays



### Tragedy

Shakespearean tragedies were formulaic in style and used traditional conventions. These tenets included:

- A hero(ine) who seeks to avenge a crime committed against a family member or a personal injustice
- A tragic character whose own flaw leads to their downfall
- An end that contains a revelation of self-knowledge by the tragic hero about how their own frailty brought on their and others' downfall

Antony and Cleopatra, Coriolanus, Hamlet, Julius Caesar, King Lear, Macbeth, Othello, Romeo & Juliet, Timon of Athens, Titus Andronicus

### Comedy

"Comedy" in its Elizabethan usage had a very different meaning from modern comedy. A Shakespearean comedy is one that has a happy ending, usually involving marriage for all the unmarried characters, and a tone and style that is more lighthearted than Shakespeare's other plays. Shakespearean comedies tend to have:

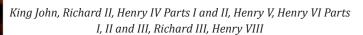
- A struggle of young lovers to overcome difficulty that is often presented by elders
- Separation and unification
- Mistaken identities
- A clever servant
- Heightened tensions, often within a family
- Multiple, intertwining plots
- Frequent use of puns

All's Well That Ends Well, As You Like It, The Comedy of Errors, Cymbeline, Love's Labours Lost, Measure for Measure, The Merry Wives of Windsor, The Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Much Ado About Nothing, Pericles- Prince of Tyre, Taming of the Shrew, The Tempest, Troilus and Cressida, Twelfth Night, Two Gentleman of Verona, Winter's Tale



#### History

Shakespeare's "history" plays are those plays based on the lives of English kings and brought massive audiences to the theatre. It is important to keep in mind that these plays are based only loosely on historical figures rather than actual events in history. The 10 plays that are categorized as histories cover English history from the twelfth to the sixteenth century particularly 1399-1485. The histories usually include elements of comedy and tragedy.





# **BASIC THEATRE VOCABULARY**

**Actor**- Individual who pretends to be a character in a play; who represents a character in a play.

**Blocking-** The pattern of movement the actors follow while on stage.

**Characters-** The personalities or parts actors become in a play; roles played by actors in a play.

**Climax**- The point of highest dramatic tension or a major turning point in the action of a play.

**Conflict-** The opposition of persons, forces, or ideas that gives rise to the dramatic action.

**Costumes-** The clothing worn by the actors to play the characters.

**Dialogue-** The words spoken by the actors during a play.

**Empathy-** The capacity to relate to the feelings of another.

**Exposition**- The part of a play that introduces the theme, main characters and circumstances.

**Falling Action**- The action after the climax of the plot.

**Interpretation-** To explain or tell the meaning of something; to present in understandable terms.

Monologue- A speech made by a single character; often when a character is "thinking out loud."

**Motivation**- An incentive or an inducement for further action for a character.

**Playwright**- The individual who writes a play.

**Plot**- What happens in a play; the order of events, the story as opposed to the theme; what happens rather than what it means.

**Resolution**- The solution to the problem after the climax in a play.

**Rising Action**- The portion of the play from the beginning to the climax, where the action increases in intensity and excitement.

**Role-** Part/ character/ person written by a playwright.

**Setting-** Where a play takes place in time, space, or location

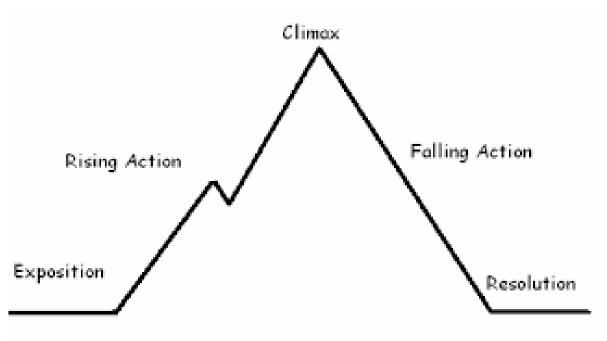
**Script**- The play in written form.

**Stage-** The area where the actors perform the play.

**Theme-** What the play means as opposed to what happens; the main idea or message within the play.

**Turning Point**- The moment in a play when events can go either way; the moment of decision; the crisis.

# **Dramatic Structure of a Play's Plot**

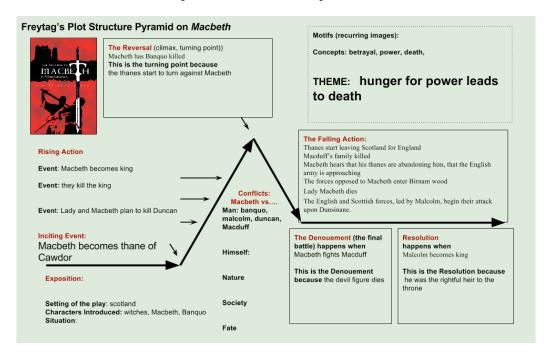


Freytag's Pyramid

**Freytag's Pyramid** illustrates the five parts of the classic dramatic plot: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution. This pattern was suggested by Gustav Freytag in 1863 as means to explain the plot of many works such Shakespeare's collection.

Please use the vocabulary from the previous page for your students to fill out their own Plot Diagram for *Hamlet*.

An example from Macbeth is provided below:



# **Director's Questions**

Shakespeare used very few stage directions, which are clues in the script for the actors and director to follow during productions. An example would be, "Actor crosses downstage right to table." The way that Shakespeare handled stage directions is that he left clues about the characters and scenery in the lines of the play.

Choose a scene from *Hamlet*, read it aloud, and use the Director's Questions below to explore the possibilities of the text. Based on your discoveries from the Director's Questions, make decisions about what the set, scenery, and costumes might look like.

# **DIRECTOR'S QUESTIONS**

#### 1. WHO AM I?

How old am I? Am I rich or poor? What is my job? Am I in school? What is my family like? Where am I from (country, state, etc.)? Am I nice? Funny? Smart? Mean? What is my personality?

#### 2. WHERE AM I?

County - State - City - Neighborhood - Building - Room What does the place look like? Do I like it or not?

#### 3. WHAT TIME IS IT?

Century - Year - Month - Week - Day - Time

### 4. WHAT ARE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS IN THE SCENE?

People in the scene?
People mentioned in the scene?
The place where they are?
The objects around them?

- 5. WHAT IS WRONG IN THIS SCENE? IS THERE A PROBLEM? A CONFLICT?
- 6. WHAT DO THE CHARACTERS WANT IN THIS SCENE? WHY CAN'T THEY HAVE IT?
- 7. WHAT DO THE CHARACTERS NEED TO DO TO GET WHAT THEY WANT?

# Hamlet ACT III, Scene i

#### **HAMLET**

--Soft you now!

The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons Be all my sins remember'd.

#### **OPHELIA**

Good my lord,

How does your honour for this many a day?

#### HAMLET

I humbly thank you; well, well, well.

#### **OPHELIA**

My lord, I have remembrances of yours, That I have longed long to re-deliver; I pray you, now receive them.

#### **HAMLET**

No. not I:

I never gave you aught.

#### **OPHELIA**

My honour'd lord, you know right well you did; And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed As made the things more rich: their perfume lost, Take these again; for to the noble mind Rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind. There, my lord.

#### **HAMLET**

Ha, ha! are you honest?

### OPHELIA

My lord?

#### HAMLET

Are you fair?

#### **OPHELIA**

What means your lordship?

#### HAMLET

That if you be honest and fair, your honesty should admit no discourse to your beauty.

#### **OPHELIA**

Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

#### HAMLET

Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness: this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once.

#### **OPHELIA**

Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so.

#### **HAMLET**

You should not have believed me; for virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it: I loved you not.

#### **OPHELIA**

I was the more deceived.

#### **HAMLET**

Get thee to a nunnery: why wouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me: I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves, all; believe none of us. Go thy ways to a nunnery. Where's your father?

#### **OPHELIA**

At home, my lord.

#### **HAMLET**

Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

#### **OPHELIA**

O, help him, you sweet heavens!

#### **HAMLET**

If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry: be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee to a nunnery, go: farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery, go, and quickly too. Farewell.

#### **OPHELIA**

O heavenly powers, restore him!

#### **HAMLET**

I have heard of your paintings too, well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another: you jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nick-name God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me mad. I say, we will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

#### Exit

#### **OPHELIA**

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!

Exit 9

# **About** Hamlet

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, is home from school to mourn the death of his father, King Hamlet. Hamlet is disgusted by the marriage of his newly widowed mother, Queen Gertrude, to his uncle, King Hamlet's brother, Claudius, who now has the throne.

A ghost appears to the castle guards and to Hamlet's friend, Horatio, who thinks the spirit looks like the former King Hamlet. Horatio asks Hamlet to see for himself and the ghost beckons Hamlet to follow him. The ghost reveals that Claudius poisoned him in the ear. Hamlet vows to avenge his father's murder.

Meanwhile, Laertes, son to the King's advisor, Polonius, is set to return to France. Before he leaves, he tells Ophelia, his sister, to be weary of Hamlet's affections towards her. Polonius gives Laertes advice on how to act abroad and orders Ophelia to stay away from Hamlet.

Hamlet's actions and behaviors begin to be questioned by all. Polonius suggests it is Ophelia's rejection of his advances. Claudius and Polonius decide to spy on Hamlet and Ophelia. Claudius also brings in Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, two childhood friends of Hamlet, to spy on him as well. Hamlet quickly realizes their intentions and takes his anger out on all of them.

A troupe of players happens to be in town and Hamlet utilizes the actors to determine the validity of his father's murder. He will have them perform a play whose story is similar to his father's death. He asks Horatio to watch Claudius' reaction throughout the play. While the court is watching, Claudius is enraged and leaves the play convincing Hamlet that he is the murderer.

Hamlet meets Gertrude in her room and an argument ensues. When he hears Polonius who is hiding behind the curtain shout for help, he stabs him thinking it is Claudius. The ghost appears to Hamlet to refocus him on the task of killing Claudius.

Claudius demands that Hamlet, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern head for England. Claudius has sent a letter with them ordering Hamlet's execution during the trip. While at sea, however, Hamlet discovers his planned murder and switches the orders, causing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to be executed. Hamlet returns to Denmark.

Meanwhile back at Elsinore, Ophelia has gone mad with grief. Laertes returns from France and learns it was Hamlet who has killed his father, Polonius. Claudius suggests that Laertes duel with Hamlet and poisons the tip of Laertes' sword for a fatal blow. If Laertes loses the duel, then Claudius will put poison into a drink for Hamlet. Gertrude enters and announces that Ophelia has drowned.

During the duel, Gertrude accidentally drinks from the poisoned cup and dies. Hamlet is wounded with the poisoned sword, but in a scuffle, the swords are switched. Laertes is also wounded with the poisoned sword. In dying, Laertes confesses Claudius' plot to kill Hamlet. Hamlet stabs Claudius and Hamlet dies asking Horatio to tell his story.

# Who's Who in HAMLET

The Major Players

<u>Hamlet</u>- Prince of Denmark, son of the dead King Hamlet. He has returned from school to mourn the death of his father and finds that his Uncle Claudius has married his mother, Gertrude, and become King instead. Hamlet seeks revenge for his father's death and is determined to do and behave however he needs in order to discover the truth.

<u>Gertrude</u>- Queen of Denmark, who along with the late King Hamlet, are the parents of Prince Hamlet. She has recently married her brother-in-law, Claudius, and has become his Queen. It is uncertain whether she knows the truth of her first husband's end but she is worried about her son's actions and health.

Claudius- the current King of Denmark, who secretly betrays Hamlet's father (Claudius' own

brother) and marries Hamlet's mother. He is afraid that Hamlet is catching onto his bad deeds.

Polonius- an advisor in the Court to Claudius as well as father of Laertes & Ophelia. He is someone who enjoys giving advice and seeks to remain an important member of the court under Claudius' rule.

Ophelia- a lady of the Court and daughter of Polonius as well as Laertes' sister.



Before the play begins, she is in love with Hamlet but upon his return and strange behavior, she agrees not to see Hamlet anymore because of her father's wishes.

<u>Laertes</u> - son of Polonius and brother to Ophelia. He has strong loyalties to his family. When he returns from abroad to find his family in ruin, he takes up responsibility for avenging them.

<u>Horatio</u>- Hamlet's friend from school who is very sensible and loyal. He first tells Hamlet about the Ghost and remains his true ally throughout the play.

<u>Ghost</u>- the spirit of Old King Hamlet, father of Hamlet and Gertrude's former husband. The Ghost demands Hamlet seek revenge for him.

<u>Rosencrantz & Guildenstern</u>- two friends of Hamlet from school that Claudius brings in to spy on Hamlet for him. They believe that they are there to help but Hamlet figures out the motives behind their presence in Elsinore.

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# Vocabulary

Below are selected words from HAMLET that will assist in the comprehension and background knowledge for the production.

**Apparition-** a supernatural being like a ghost

**Fashion-** popular trends in styles of clothing but also in manners or behavior; something associated with a specified place or people

Foil- a sword used mainly for the sport of fencing

**Foul-** having a bad smell or taste; something wicked or unfair; an action or mistake that is harmful to yourself or others

**Honest-** someone who speaks the truth or does the right thing; used to persuade others of the truth of something

**Nature-** the world around us including plants, animals, and the humans on the earth; what makes up a person's character or personality

**Remembrance-** a memory or recollection; an item kept to remind you of someone

**Revenge-** the goal to hurt someone because of something wrong done to you

**Spirit-** what makes a person who they are - emotions, characteristics, behavior, etc.

Vow- a promise

**Woe-** a feeling of great sadness; the thing that causes troubles

**Wretched**- a person in a very unhappy or unfortunate state; very bad

**Wrong-** untrue, dishonest, or mistaken; doing something that is unfair or unkind to another







# Themes

We have included some of the major themes from HAMLET as well as some discussion questions to get your students immersed in the world of the play.

# **Healthy Relationships**

This play examines several kinds of love and the relationships people can have with each other - love between a couple (Hamlet & Ophelia), relationships between family members (Fathers and Daughters, Mothers and Sons), and even the respect that you have for your self.

<u>Questions</u>: How can these types of love make a person act differently or from how they would normally behave? Is changing for someone else in order for them to love you healthy? What are some warning signs from the play that display unhealthy relationships early on? How do the evolve throughout the play? Have you ever been put in a situation by someone that you care about that doesn't ring true to who you are?

I.E. Is is fair that Polonius forbade Ophelia from seeing Hamlet again? Should Gertrude have reached out to Hamlet sooner to check on his feelings and mental health? Did Hamlet ever consider what committing acts of revenge would do to him or how it would effect his own self-respect?

#### Conflict Resolution - Action vs. Inaction

The characters in this play all approach how to resolve their problems in different ways. It manifests itself through Hamlet as he denies the grieving process for his father and continues down his path of destruction which in the end, will never bring his father back from death. Hamlet struggles with whether to act on the impulse of his emotions throughout the play. For Ophelia, she embraces the instability and pain that comes with the belief that she is all alone. Every path seems hopeless without a person to turn to that she trusts. Both resolve in needless, disastrous results.

<u>Questions</u>: What alternatives could the characters in this play employed to resolve their problems? Are there resources that they had that they did not utilize? What were their motivations that led to poor decisions and outcomes - grief, emotions, isolation, denial? How could this tragedy turn out much happier and safer for everyone?

# **Ambition & Appearances**

The characters in this play often assume the personas that will be most helpful to their plots and strategies. In the world of the play and, indeed, society as a whole, those who display a sense of drive and passion to further their lot in life are praised as being ambitious. When people share their weaknesses or vulnerability, it can open the door for those who would exploit those traits. This play turns these assumptions on their head and allows us to weigh the cost and effects of what putting on a persona can bring you.

I.E. Claudius appears to be a calm and tactical ruler, but in fact, he is consumed by ambition and is eventually destroyed by it. Hamlet, on the other hand, chooses to embrace what others view as faults to get closer to the truth even at the cost of his own integrity and the safety of others.

Questions: What are the benefits of being ambitious? What are the risks? Is being vulnerable in order to exploit others defendable? At what point does forcing the version of yourself that gets you what you want at the cost of others become unacceptable to your loved ones or society as a whole?

# **Pre-Show and Post-Show Activities for Exploration**

Please complete the following activities before & after the performance.

### Before the Performance

- 1. Familiarize your students with HAMLET and discuss with your class the parts of this play- characters, themes, plot, etc. What are their expectations of experiencing this performance?
- 2. Examine the major themes of HAMLET. For each theme, have the students list examples from their own lives and from the modern world around them. Prepare the students to look for these themes in the performance and discuss how they relate or do not relate to their own lives.
- 3. Hamlet bases his actions on the visitations from a Ghost of his father. Why or why not is this a good plan of action for a leader? Is a good leader ever motivated by revenge? Should Hamlet be King instead of Claudius based on both of their actions?
- 4. What types of technical theatre are needed for the performance including sets, props, costumes, sound, and lighting? Find specifics from the script and add some of your own to the list. How do these elements add to the experience? What do you expect from our Spring Tour of this show that has to adapt to many different locations?

Suggested Questions for the Q&A with the Actors
-How do you prepare to play multiple characters?
-What sort of training or education do you need to be an actor or to be involved in theater?
-What would you do if you felt that you had no one to turn to about a problem?
-What's your favorite play written by William Shakespeare?
-What kind of roles are your favorite to portray on stage?

#### *After the Performance*

- 5. Discuss how Hamlet manipulates those around him to either distract them from his goal or use them to get what he wants. What tactics does he use? What kind of relationship does he have with these characters? How were you able to figure out the truth of these relationships from the actors' performances?
- 6. If Shakespeare were to write a play about your life, then what would it be? A comedy, a tragedy, a history, or some combination? Explain your choice and try writing the plot outline with Freytag's Pyramid for your life thus far.
- 7. Write a letter to one of the characters in the play and give them some helpful advice. Pick a spot in the play where they believe that the tragic ending could still be stopped. What could they do to avoid these events? What resources could help or even save them?
- 8. Compare the physical choices the actors made in the play to what their characters were saying in the scenes. Give three examples of how their physical choices- space, pace, levels, etc. enhanced the impact of their performance. Is there a choice that you would've made differently? What would it have been and why?

# **Shakespeare Links & Resources**

Type the word Shakespeare in a search engine and you will find a plethora of information on him, his works and his environment. Show your students that the internet can be a great way to research and gather valuable information - especially when you can't find it at your local library. We also recommend watching the theatrical versions of some of the scenes they will experience in the HAMLET Spring Tour for comparison and chance to open up discussion about their comprehension of the choices made.

www.absoluteshakespeare.com Comprehensive Resource of Works

www.folger.edu/template.cfm?cid=618

The Folger Shakespeare Library

www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/ The Penguin & Signet Classic's Teacher Guide

Do you have students that may be in need of help, someone to talk to, or a community? We encourage you to share these Resources with them, so they know that they are never alone and always have someone who can be there for them.

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Toll-free, 24-hour, confidential hotline that connects you to a trained counselor at the nearest suicide crisis center.

#### **TXT 4 HELP**

Resource for abuse, bullying, family problems, depression, suicidal thoughts, and others. Text the word "safe" and your current location (address, city, state) to **4HELP (44357)**. Within seconds, you will receive a message with the closest Safe Place site and phone number for the local youth agency. For immediate help, reply with "2chat" to text interactively with a trained counselor.

# Classroom Challenge:

Write a letter to the Kentucky Shakespeare Professional Actors who performed in the HAMLET SPRING TOUR performance. Describe what you liked about the performance and how it helped to see Shakespeare be performed rather than just reading it. Describe what you did, saw, and heard.

What was your favorite part?

Mail to: Kentucky Shakespeare 323 West Broadway, Suite 401 Louisville, KY 40202

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