

'Hamlet: A Shakespeare Story' by Andrew Matthews and Tony Ross

Published by Orchard Classics

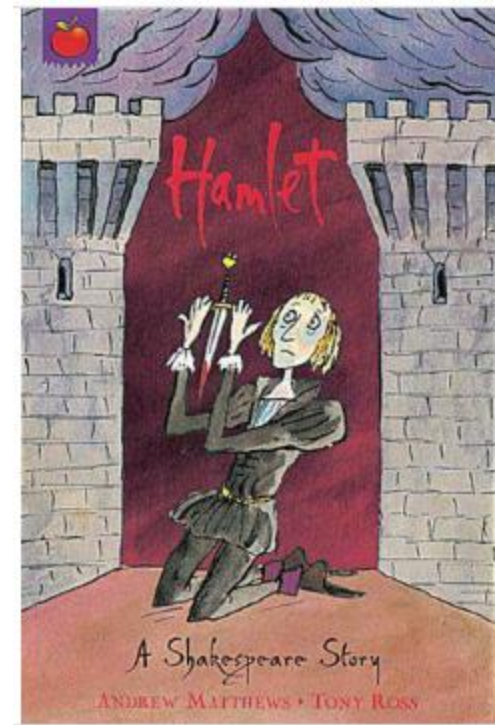
Ages 7-11

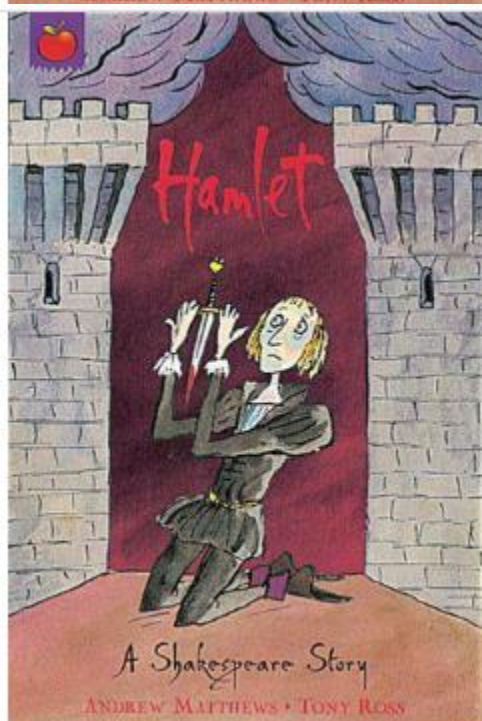
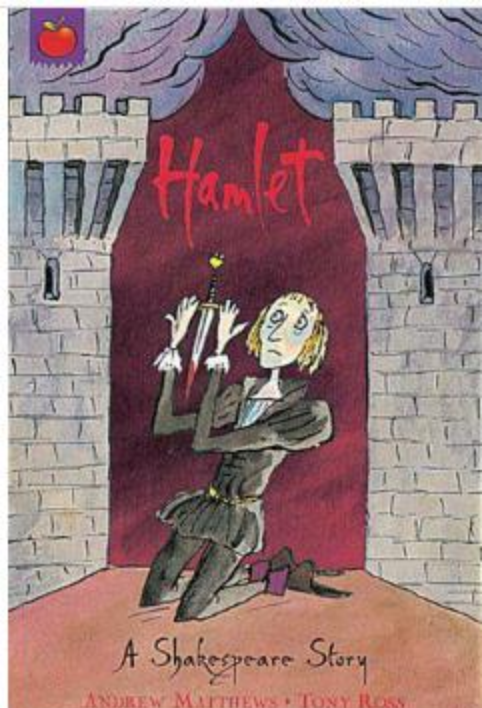
Reasons for selection and synopsis

A ghost, a tortured prince and an evil uncle come together in this explosive story about revenge, family and madness.

The story opens on a frosty night, when the ghost of Hamlet's father visits him. Many believe the late king was killed by a poisonous snake bite. However, the spirit reveals to Hamlet that he was murdered by his brother, Hamlet's uncle who now sits on the throne, married to his mother. Told from Hamlet's point of view, this is an accessible re-telling of one of Shakespeare's most popular tragedies.

You can watch a re-telling of the play here:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03f5fjr>





Before reading...

Look carefully at the cast list. Draw lines to match the name of the character to their role in the story.

Hamlet	Daughter to Polonius
Gertrude	Son to the former King, nephew to Claudius
Horatio	Son to Polonius
Ophelia	Queen of Denmark and mother to Hamlet
Polonius	Lord Chamberlain
Claudius	Friend to Hamlet
Laertes	King of Denmark

Cast list

The Ghost of Hamlet's father



Gertrude

Queen of Denmark
Mother to Hamlet



Claudius

King of Denmark



Hamlet

Son to the former King
Nephew to Claudius



Horatio

Friend to Hamlet



Laertes

Son to Polonius



Ophelia

Daughter to Polonius



Polonius
Lord Chamberlain



A troop of travelling players

The Scene

Denmark in the thirteenth century.

Task 3

*"I am thy father's spirit,
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And for the day confined to fast in fires,
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away...."*

(Act I, Scene V)

Who is speaking?

Who might they be speaking to?

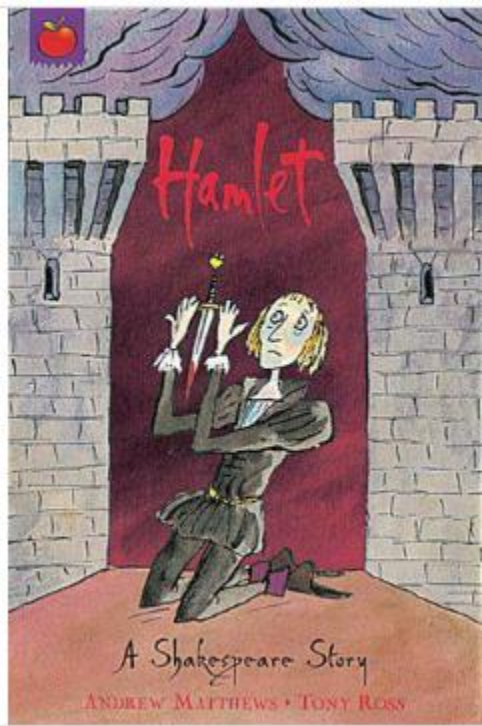
What is a spirit?

How do we know the spirit is tortured?

What might the 'foul crimes' be?

Find and copy a word that means the same as 'to be rid of' or 'to remove'.

How might the spirit be freed?





Hamlet

Many years ago in Denmark there was a prince called Hamlet.

One day Hamlet's father, the king, dies suddenly and Hamlet is very sad.

After this, Hamlet's mother, Gertrude, gets married again very quickly. She marries her husband's brother, Claudius, and Claudius is now the king!

'Aargh! How could you do this to me!'

One night Hamlet's friend, Horatio, tells him that there is a ghost in the castle. It is the ghost of Hamlet's father!

'Claudius killed me with poison! Hamlet, you must punish Claudius for me!'

Hamlet is confused. He doesn't know if he believes the ghost and he doesn't know what to do.

Hamlet now acts very strangely. He is mean and angry, and he upsets his girlfriend, Ophelia.

'Go away! Leave me alone!'

'Oh, he is so mean!'

One day a group of actors come to the castle and Hamlet makes a plan. He asks the actors to change their play. The new play will show a king poisoned like Hamlet's father.

'With this play I will catch the king.'

Shakespeare



When Claudius watches the play he looks very worried and runs away. Hamlet sees him and he knows the truth.

Claudius is very worried about Hamlet now and makes a plan with Ophelia's brother, Laertes.

'You will fight him and we will put poison on the sword and in his drink too.'

Laertes and Hamlet fight. Laertes cuts Hamlet, but in the fight Hamlet takes Laertes' sword and cuts him with it too!

'Here, Hamlet, drink this.'

'No, thank you, Mother. I'm not thirsty.'

'No, don't!'

'It was him! He poisoned us all!'

Finally, Hamlet knows he must stop Claudius.

'Aargh! Have this and this!'

All the royal family are now poisoned and Hamlet tells his friend that there must be a new king.

'Goodbye, my prince.'

Listen to this story <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/short-stories/hamlet>

www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglishkids

Lesson 2

Summer 2

Week 2

Tuesday 9th June, 2020.

LO: To deduce the meaning of words in context from a text and infer information.

Read p 7 – 15 independantly.

SC:

- to be able to deduce the meaning of words from the context they have been written in



*Murder most foul, as in the best it is,
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.*

Ghost of Hamlet's father; I.v.

Hamlet



Snowflakes twirled in the wind that moaned around the battlements. I turned up the collar of my cloak against the cold, and kept my eyes fixed on the place where the guards had told me they had seen my father's ghost.

Horatio, my oldest friend, was with me. It was Horatio who had brought me the news that my father, the king, was dead – bitten by a snake while he was sleeping in the orchard – and it was Horatio who had stood by my side at my father's funeral. Something in me died too that day, and was sealed up in the Royal Tomb with my father. My grief was so great that it sucked the light and joy out of everything.



From the courtyard below came the sound of drunken laughter.

"Someone is still celebrating the marriage of your mother and your uncle!" Horatio said.

He meant it as a joke, but the joke raised more black thoughts in my mind.

"How could she marry so soon after the funeral?" I said. "How could she forget my father so quickly?"

"You should be happy for her, my lord Hamlet," said Horatio. "She has found new happiness in the midst of sorrow, and your uncle, Claudius, will rule Denmark wisely until you come of age."



I laughed bitterly. I had seen cunning in Claudius's face, but no wisdom. I was about to say so, when midnight began to ring out from the turret above our heads.

And as the last stroke throbbed through the air, the darkness and the falling snow shaped themselves into the spirit of my father, beckoning to me.





Horatio gasped
out a warning, but
I paid no attention.
I ran through the
dancing flakes, my
heart beating so fast
that I thought it would burst.

The ghost was dressed in armour, a
circlet of gold gleaming against the black
iron of its helm. Its face was
my father's face, but
twisted in agony,
its eyes burning
like cold, blue
flames. Its voice
was a groan of
despair that sent
shudders down
my backbone.



"Hamlet, my son!
My spirit cannot
find rest until my
murder has been
avenged."

"Murder?"
I cried.

"The serpent
who stung me in
the orchard was my
brother, Claudius," said
the ghost. "As I lay asleep,
it was he who crept to my side
and poured poison in my ear. Claudius
took my life, my throne and now my wife.
Avenge me, Hamlet!"

Before I could say more, the ghost faded
into snowy blackness, and the echoes of
its voice became the whistling of the wind.



My mind reeled. Had I really spoken to the ghost of my father, or was it a devil from Hell, sent to trick me into doing evil? I had suspected that Claudius might have had something to do with my father's death, but could I trust the word of a vision from beyond the grave? How could I be sure of the truth? How could I, the Prince of Denmark, not yet twenty years' old, avenge the death of a king?



I turned, and stumbled back to Horatio. His face was grey and he quivered with fear. "Such sights are enough to drive a man mad!" he whispered.



I laughed then, long and hard, because Horatio had unwittingly provided me with an answer.




Who could have more freedom than a mad prince? If I pretended to be mad, I could say whatever I wished and search for the truth without arousing Claudius's suspicion.

* * *

LO: To infer information from a text.

Task 1: p7-15



1. Can you find an example of personification on page 7?
2. Replace the words in bold with synonyms: Hamlet's mother has found new happiness in the midst of sorrow.
3. What is a 'turret'? (pg 10)
4. Write a definition of these words on page 15: unwittingly, arouse, suspicion, 
5. Who told Hamlet they had seen his father's ghost?
6. What is the name of Hamlet's oldest friend?
7. Hamlet's father was killed because he was bitten by a spider. True or false?
8. Who has Hamlet's mother married?
9. How did Claudius kill his brother?
10. How old is Hamlet?

Task 2:




1. How does Hamlet feel about his mother marrying again?
2. Underline any phrases that tell us how Hamlet feels towards Claudius.
3. What might Hamlet be thinking and feeling when he sees the spirit on page 11?
4. Underline any words or phrases on page 11 that tell us the spirit is in pain and tormented.
5. What might Hamlet be thinking and feeling when the spirit tells him he was in fact murdered?
6. Which words or phrases on page 14 tell us that Horatio is scared by the ghost?



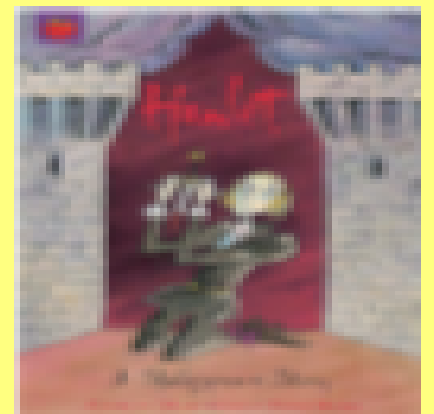
Explain



8. In the play, Hamlet is unimpressed that his mother had married again so quickly and says, "Frailty, thy name is woman!" (Act I, Scene II).  What might he mean by this?

Task 3:

Choose and complete a summary.



Summarise the relationship between Hamlet and Horatio.

Summarise the spirit's speech on page 12 in one sentence.

Summarise this section of the story in three sentences.

