

AP English Literature and Composition

Week Three – April 13 – April 17

Mrs. Deeter – 4<sup>th</sup> Period

**AP Drama/Long Fiction Unit**

**Part III**

**Skill 7.C – Develop commentary that establishes and explains relationships among textual evidence, the line of reasoning, and the thesis.**

**Exemplar Text – *The Tragedy of Hamlet* “To be or not to be” soliloquy**

**Hamlet’s ‘To be or not to be’ speech is, arguably, Shakespeare’s most familiar soliloquy. It reveals the conflict in Hamlet’s perspectives and motives particularly through contrasting ideas and images.**

1. Re-read the soliloquy and the modern translation (attached).
2. **Draft** an argument that analyzes how Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” soliloquy reveals his conflicting perspectives and motives, particularly through the contrasting ideas and images in the soliloquy.
  - Justify your claims through clear, logical explanations that articulate relationships among textual evidence, the line of reasoning, and the thesis.
3. When we return, you will peer critique the degree to which a classmate has justified his or her claims regarding the criteria above.

**Useful Resources**

Analysis Help

<https://www.litcharts.com/blog/shakespeare/hamletssoliloquy/>

<https://www.nosweatshakespeare.com/quotes/soliloquies/hamlet-to-be-or-not-to-be/> (While you’re here, check out the videos at the bottom of the page.)

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**To be or not to be Act III, Scene I**

*o 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? To die: to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep: perchance to dream: ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause: there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will*

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*And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
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 pith and moment  
With this regard their currents turn awry,  
And lose the name of action.—Soft you now!  
The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons  
Be all my sins remember'd.*

Ben Florman, LitCharts's co-founder, wrote the following modern English translation of Hamlet's soliloquy:  
<https://www.litcharts.com/blog/shakespeare/hamletssoliloquy/>

*To live, or to die? That is the question.*

*Is it nobler to suffer through all the terrible things  
fate throws at you, or to fight off your troubles,  
and, in doing so, end them completely?*

*To die, to sleep—because that's all dying is—  
and by a sleep I mean an end to all the heartache  
and the thousand injuries that we are vulnerable to—  
that's an end to be wished for!*

*To die, to sleep. To sleep, perhaps to dream—yes,  
but there's there's the catch. Because the kinds of  
dreams that might come in that sleep of death—  
after you have left behind your mortal body—  
are something to make you anxious.*

*That's the consideration that makes us suffer  
the calamities of life for so long.*

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*Because who would bear all the trials and tribulations of time—  
the oppression of the powerful, the insults from arrogant men,  
the pangs of unrequited love, the slowness of justice,  
the disrespect of people in office,*

*and the general abuse of good people by bad—*

*when you could just settle all your debts  
using nothing more than an unsheathed dagger?*

*Who would bear his burdens, and grunt*

*and sweat through a tiring life, if they weren't frightened  
of what might happen after death—*

*that undiscovered country from which no visitor returns,  
which we wonder about and which makes us*

*prefer the troubles we know rather than fly off*

*to face the ones we don't? Thus, the fear of*

*death makes us all cowards, and our natural*

*willingness to act is made weak by too much thinking.*

*Actions of great urgency and importance*

*get thrown off course because of this sort of thinking,*

*and they cease to be actions at all.*

*But wait, here is the beautiful Ophelia!*

*[To OPHELIA] Beauty, may you forgive all my sins in your prayers.*