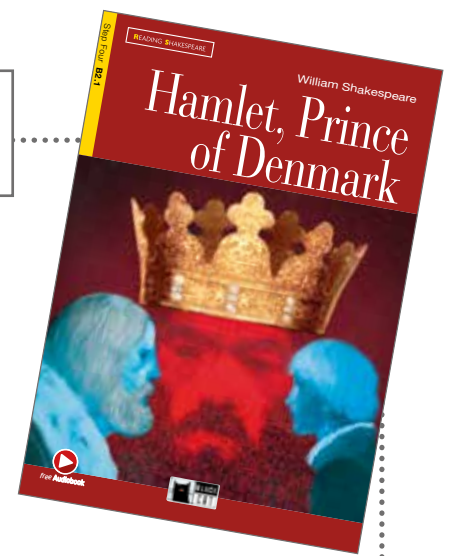


level
B2.1

READING ACTIVITY 1/6



HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

To get into the Story

Hamlet is one of William Shakespeare's (1564-1616) best known plays. It is a great revenge tragedy with all the timeless and universal elements of human emotion. *Hamlet* is much more than a revenge tragedy because it contemplates life, death and the reason for existence. It has rarely been off the stage in the 400 years since it was written!

After the sudden death of his father, the king, the young prince Hamlet returns to Elsinore Castle in Denmark. Here he finds that his mother has already remarried and he is very upset. Her new husband is Hamlet's uncle, Claudius, the brother of the old king. One night Hamlet sees his father's ghost who says that he was poisoned by his own brother! The ghost tells Hamlet to take revenge, but will Hamlet be able to do this?

PREDICTION • WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. Choose true (T) or false (F).

- | | | |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Hamlet can no longer live at Elsinore Castle. | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F |
| 2. Hamlet is furious with his mother and refuses to speak to her. | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F |
| 3. Hamlet's uncle tries to be friendly with Hamlet. | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F |
| 4. Hamlet imagined the ghost of his father, which didn't exist. | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F |
| 5. Hamlet will think of some kind of revenge. | <input type="checkbox"/> T | <input type="checkbox"/> F |

Mark your answers and when you finish reading the book, check them to see if you predicted correctly.



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READING ACTIVITY 2/6



READING ACTIVITY

Part 1 – Read the excerpt from *Hamlet*, “A ghost at Elsinore”, and then do the activity below.

The king and queen, followed by all the courtiers, left the Great Hall and Hamlet was left alone with his thoughts.

‘I’d prefer to be dead!’ he cried. ‘Life has no meaning any more. I can’t believe it! my father’s only been dead for two months and my mother’s already married again! Oh, women are so weak! Even an animal would have mourned for longer. And she’s married Claudius! A man who is the exact opposite of my father! how could she? It’s sure to end badly.’

Just at that moment, the door opened and Horatio, his old friend from university, came in. There were two castle guards with him.

‘Horatio!’ Hamlet exclaimed, a smile brightening his face for once. ‘How good to see you! But why aren’t you in Wittenberg?’

‘I wanted to come to your father’s funeral, Hamlet.’

‘My mother’s wedding, you mean,’ replied Hamlet bitterly.

‘It’s true. There wasn’t much time between them.’

‘They were so close together that we ate the leftovers¹ from the funeral at the wedding banquet!’

‘Your father was a great king,’ said Horatio.

‘He was a perfect human being,’ said Hamlet, sinking back into melancholy.² I’ll never know a man like him again.’

‘Hamlet, I have to tell you something,’ said Horatio very seriously. ‘I think I saw him last night.’

‘Who? My father?’

Hamlet’s melancholic expression quickly turned to one of shock, then suspicion.

‘Is this a joke, Horatio? My father’s dead.’

‘Calm down and I’ll explain everything.’

Horatio took hold of his friend’s arm and, as they walked around the Great Hall, he told him what had happened.

‘Those two guards over there told me they had seen a ghost while they were keeping watch.’

1 **leftovers** : food remaining at the end of a meal.

2 **melancholy** : sadness.



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READING ACTIVITY

3/6



2. Choose the correct answer—a, b or c.

1. How long had Hamlet's father been dead?
 - a. two years
 - b. two weeks
 - c. two months
2. How did Hamlet feel about his mother's marriage?
 - a. He strongly disapproved.
 - b. He was indifferent.
 - c. He favoured it.
3. Why had Horatio come to Elsinore?
 - a. He wanted to see his university friend, Hamlet.
 - b. He wanted to be present at Hamlet's father's funeral.
 - c. He was invited to the marriage banquet of Hamlet's mother.
4. Why was Hamlet suddenly shocked and suspicious?
 - a. Because he did not trust Horatio.
 - b. Because Horatio told him that he had seen Hamlet's father last night.
 - c. Because there were guards walking in the Great Hall.

QUICK QUIZ!

3. Match the opposites.

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 1. melancholy | a. trust |
| 2. bitter | b. happiness |
| 3. weak | c. alive |
| 4. suspicion | d. sweet |
| 5. dead | e. strong |



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READING ACTIVITY 4/6



PART 2 – Read the excerpt from Chapter One, A Ghost at Elsinore and then do the activity.

That night Hamlet and Horatio joined the guards on the battlements.

‘This is when it usually appears,’ said Horatio quietly.

The castle clock was striking twelve when they saw a pale glow in the darkness. It was moving silently towards them. It was the ghost! As it got nearer, Hamlet recognized his father’s helmet. He was terrified.

‘Father?’ he managed to say. ‘Is that you? What do you want?’

The ghost beckoned¹ to him.

‘He wants you to follow him, Hamlet,’ whispered Horatio.

‘Don’t go, sir!’ one of the guards said. ‘It’s too dangerous.’

‘I must go. It’s my father and he wants to say something to me,’ replied Hamlet following the ghost into the darkness.

When they were alone together the ghost spoke.

‘I am your father’s ghost,’ it said. ‘But I will suffer and will not be able to rest in peace until the wrongs done to me are put right.’

‘Wrongs? What do you mean?’

‘If you love me, Hamlet...’

‘Of course I do. With all my heart!’

‘...then you must avenge² my murder!’

Hamlet’s blood froze.

‘They told you a poisonous snake bit me, but it isn’t true,’ the ghost went on.

‘The snake was my own brother, who was in love with the queen and wanted to have her and my kingdom. While I was sleeping in the garden, he poured poison in my ear and killed me. I was murdered without a chance to say goodbye to you. Avenge my death, Hamlet! The sun will rise soon and I must go now. Goodbye! Goodbye! Remember me!’

1 **beckoned** : made a sign for someone to come nearer.

2 **avenge** : punish a person responsible for something bad done to you.



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READING ACTIVITY

5/6



1. Choose the correct answer to complete the sentence.

1. Hamlet and Horatio joined *their friends/the guards* on the battlements.
2. They saw a pale *moon/glow* when the castle clock struck *midnight/eleven*.
3. Hamlet recognized his father's *old sword/helmet*.
4. *Horatio/The guards* told Hamlet not to follow the ghost.
5. The ghost said that he had been *murdered/drowned*.
6. The ghost's brother used *poison/a snake* to kill him.
7. The ghost told Hamlet to *remember his death/avenge his death*.

QUICK QUIZ!

2. Complete the table with the correct tense of the verb.

VERB	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
1. strike
2. bite
3. freeze
4. rise
5. speak

