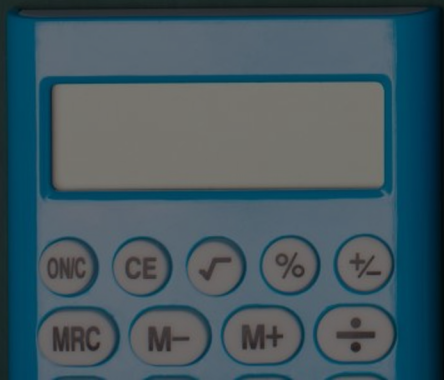


HAMLET

DEB Pre 2024





QUESTION ONE

THE QUESTION

'Both Gertrude and Ophelia are significant characters in William Shakespeares' play, *Hamlet*, despite having no power over their own destinies'.

Discuss the reasons why you agree or disagree with the above statement, developing your response with reference to the text.

USING WHAT YOU KNOW

This is a question on the characters AND their role in the play.

Two parts to the question

The importance of the characters

Their lack of control of their own lives

PLANNING - ROLE

What is each character's role in the play?

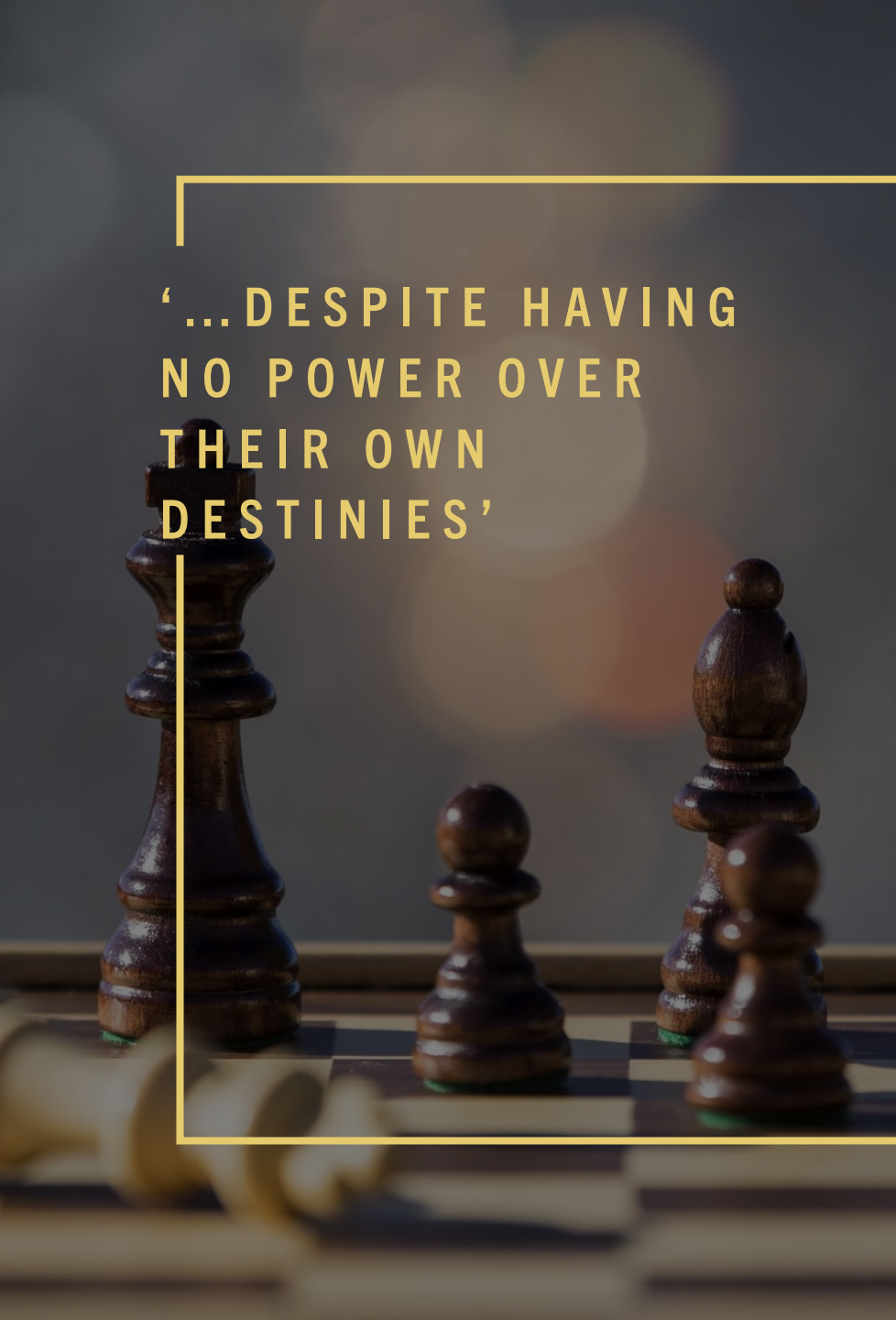
Do they highlight or aid our understanding of certain themes?

Do they provide us with insights into other characters?

Do they progress the plot?

Do they add to the dramatic tension of the play?

Do they contribute to the tragic nature of the play?



**‘... DESPITE HAVING
NO POWER OVER
THEIR OWN
DESTINIES’**

- Best to work this into the points as you go along
- Example: when discussing Ophelia’s tragic end, discuss how her powerlessness adds to the heartbreaking sadness of her demise. Etc.

INTRODUCTION

Thesis

Outline the points you will discuss: focus on the women's roles in the play, their scope of influence on other characters, their lack of power and the consequent deepening of our understanding of key themes



GERTRUDE

- Important figure in one way: Hamlet's mother, widow of Old Hamlet and wife of Claudius
- Limited power: must be loyal to her husband
- Highlights the role of women at the time and expectations placed on women by society
- Sexuality: Hamlet is disgusted by his mother's relationship; he extends this disgust to Ophelia and all women
- Powerlessness and passivity in the closet scene
- Shows her love for Hamlet at the end: significant role in the final scene

OPHELIA

Linked to Polonius, Laertes and Hamlet

Controlled and used as a pawn by her father and the king

Victim of Hamlet's misogyny

Shows us what happens to the innocent and powerless in a corrupt world

Controlled by father and brother (advice on Hamlet's intentions, spying on Hamlet).

She inspires pity and horror in the audience when she appears in court shortly before her death

Her madness and death are the final straw for Laertes, leading to the duel in the final scene

CONCLUSION

- Brief summary of the main points of the essay
- How Gertrude and Ophelia's character arcs influence the action of the play and highlight important themes, despite their lack of control over their own destinies
- Shakespeare uses these characters to critique societal norms




The image features a dense field of 3D question marks. Most are dark grey and recede into the background, while one in the center is bright yellow and stands out prominently. The scene is lit from the side, creating strong highlights and deep shadows that emphasize the three-dimensional nature of the symbols.

QUESTION TWO



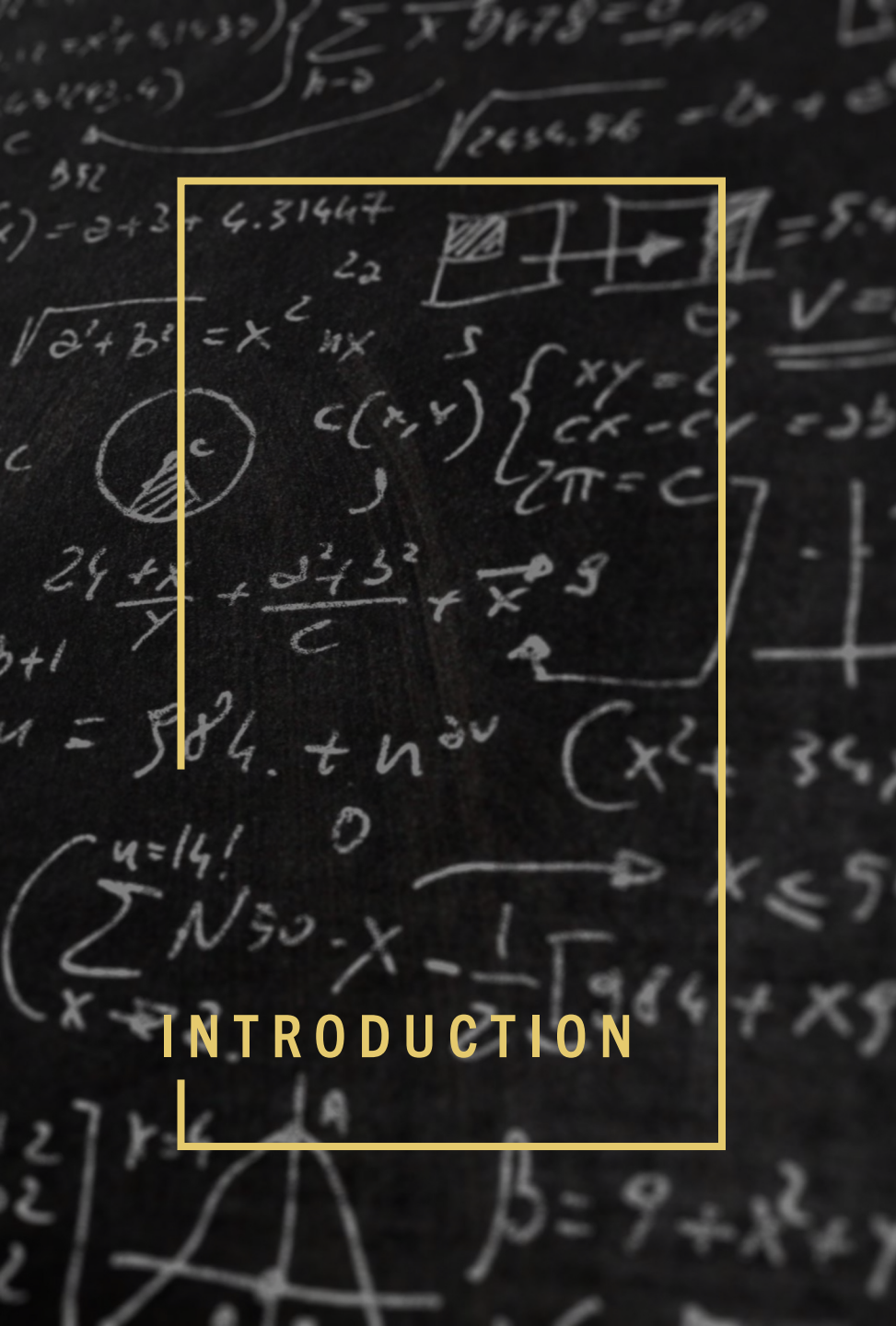
THE QUESTION

- Discuss how deception and the supernatural are used effectively in Shakespeare's play, *Hamlet*, in order to make the plot intriguing. Develop your discussion with reference to the text.



**USING WHAT
YOU KNOW**

- Two aspects to consider: (i) deception (ii) the supernatural
- In each case, how do they add to the play?

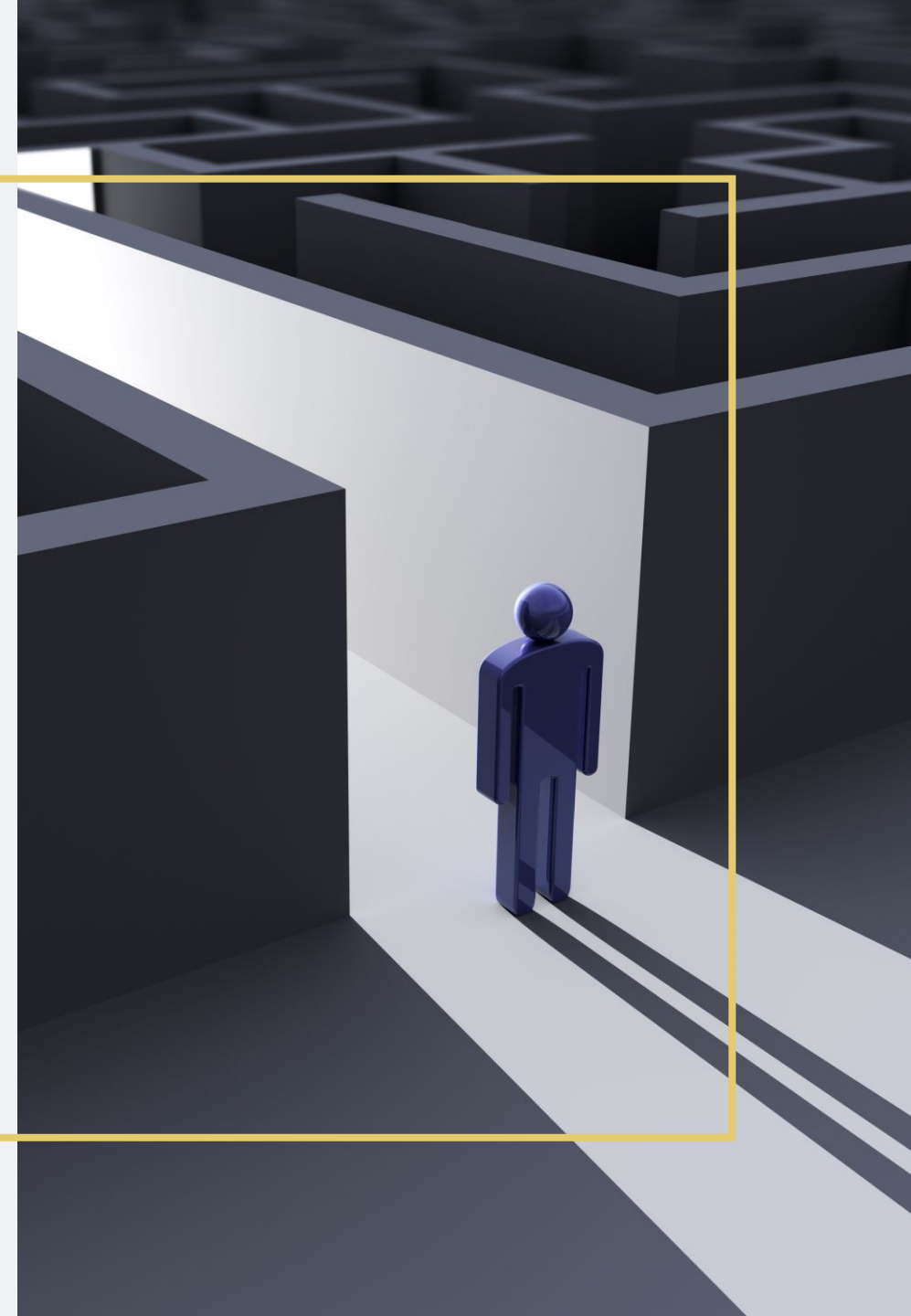


INTRODUCTION

In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare effectively employs deception and supernatural elements to create suspense and complexity in the plot, which captivates the audience and deepens the play's thematic resonance.

THE ROLE OF THE SUPERNATURAL

- Discuss the appearance of the Ghost as the catalyst for the play's events.
- Analyse how the ghost's revelations about his murder introduce the themes of uncertainty and the quest for revenge.
- Explore the supernatural as a source of internal and external conflict for Hamlet and other characters.



DECEPTION

- Highlight key instances of deception:
- Hamlet's feigned madness as a strategy to uncover the truth.
- Claudius' deceit in murdering King Hamlet and subsequently concealing his crime.
- Polonius' spying on Hamlet for Claudius.
- The play within the play
- Rosencrantz and Guildenstern spying on Hamlet
- Claudius' plot to have Hamlet killed in England
- Discuss how deception complicates the plot and blurs the lines between reality and appearance.

HOW DO THESE ELEMENTS MAKE THE PLOT INTRIGUING?

- Analyze how the supernatural and deception interplay to heighten the dramatic tension and uncertainty within the narrative.
- Discuss Hamlet's scepticism about the ghost's authenticity and whether it might be an evil spirit
- Explore the consequences of the ghost's information leading Hamlet to stage the play within the play to confirm Claudius' guilt.

CONCLUSION

- Summarise how the effective use of deception and the supernatural not only makes the plot of Hamlet intriguing but also deepens our understanding of the themes you have discussed.
- Reflect on the enduring appeal of Hamlet, emphasising how Shakespeare's masterful manipulation of these elements continues to engage and provoke thought in audiences and readers alike.
- Conclude with a statement on the timeless relevance of these themes in understanding human nature.