

Hamlet

Leaving Cert Exam Question - 2005

The Question

- ❖ 'We admire Hamlet as much for his weaknesses as for his strengths.' Write a response to this view of the character of Hamlet, supporting your points by reference to the text.



Guidelines

- ❖ Expect candidates to maintain a focus on the strength(s) and weakness(es) of Hamlet's character and on their admiration or otherwise of those strengths and weaknesses. Code AW for 'admire weakness' and AS for 'admire strength'.
- ❖ Candidates may disagree in whole or in part with the thesis of the question in which case code AW – for 'do not admire weakness' and AS – for 'do not admire strength/s'.
- ❖ Where candidates address our admiration of Hamlet's weaknesses and/or strengths in an indirect or implicit way, code W for 'weakness' and S for 'strength'.
- ❖ Interpret 'admire' liberally to mean 'to enjoy', 'to be fascinated by', 'to be interested in', 'to find remarkable or important', and so on.

Possible Points

- ❖ **We enjoy:**

- ❖ - his intelligence, his wit, his words

- ❖ - his insight into life and death

- ❖ **We admire:**

- ❖ - his loyalty to his father and to his friends

- ❖ - his bravery in taking on the State

- ❖ - his recklessness

- ❖ - the strategist

❖ **We are fascinated by:**

❖ - his heroic failure

❖ - his response to his traumatic experiences

❖ - the profundity of his thinking

❖ - his complex response to a difficult task

❖ - the deviousness of his mind even though his actions cause others to suffer

❖ **We find interesting:**

- ❖ - his ability to improvise as in the play within the play
- ❖ - his rashness which leads him into further trouble
- ❖ - his procrastination because we see ourselves reflected in it

❖ **But, we disapprove of:**

❖ - his cruelty to others

❖ - his aimlessness

❖ - his tendency to find refuge in words

❖ - his self-loathing, his despair

❖ - his treatment of women

❖ - his impulsiveness

❖ - his fondness for melodrama