

# 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 3D-rendered orange question mark in the center, standing out against a background of numerous smaller, grey question marks. The scene is lit from the upper left, creating soft shadows and highlights on the 3D shapes. A thin yellow border frames the entire composition.

## QUESTION TWO

The background of the slide is a dark grey color with a pattern of light grey question marks. A yellow border frames the entire slide content. On the left side, the text 'THE QUESTION' is written in a bold, yellow, sans-serif font. The rest of the slide is white and contains a single bullet point.

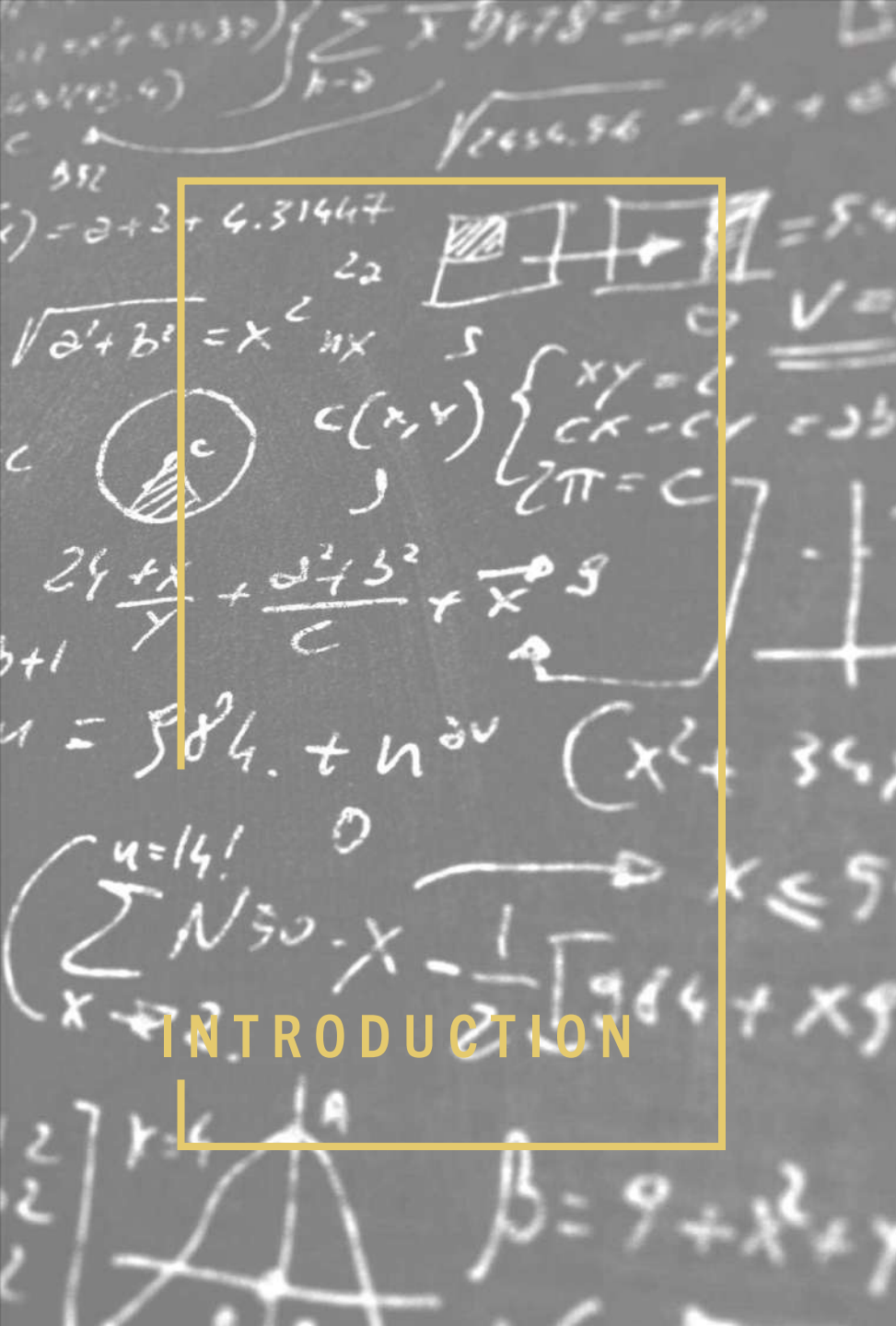
## THE QUESTION

- 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

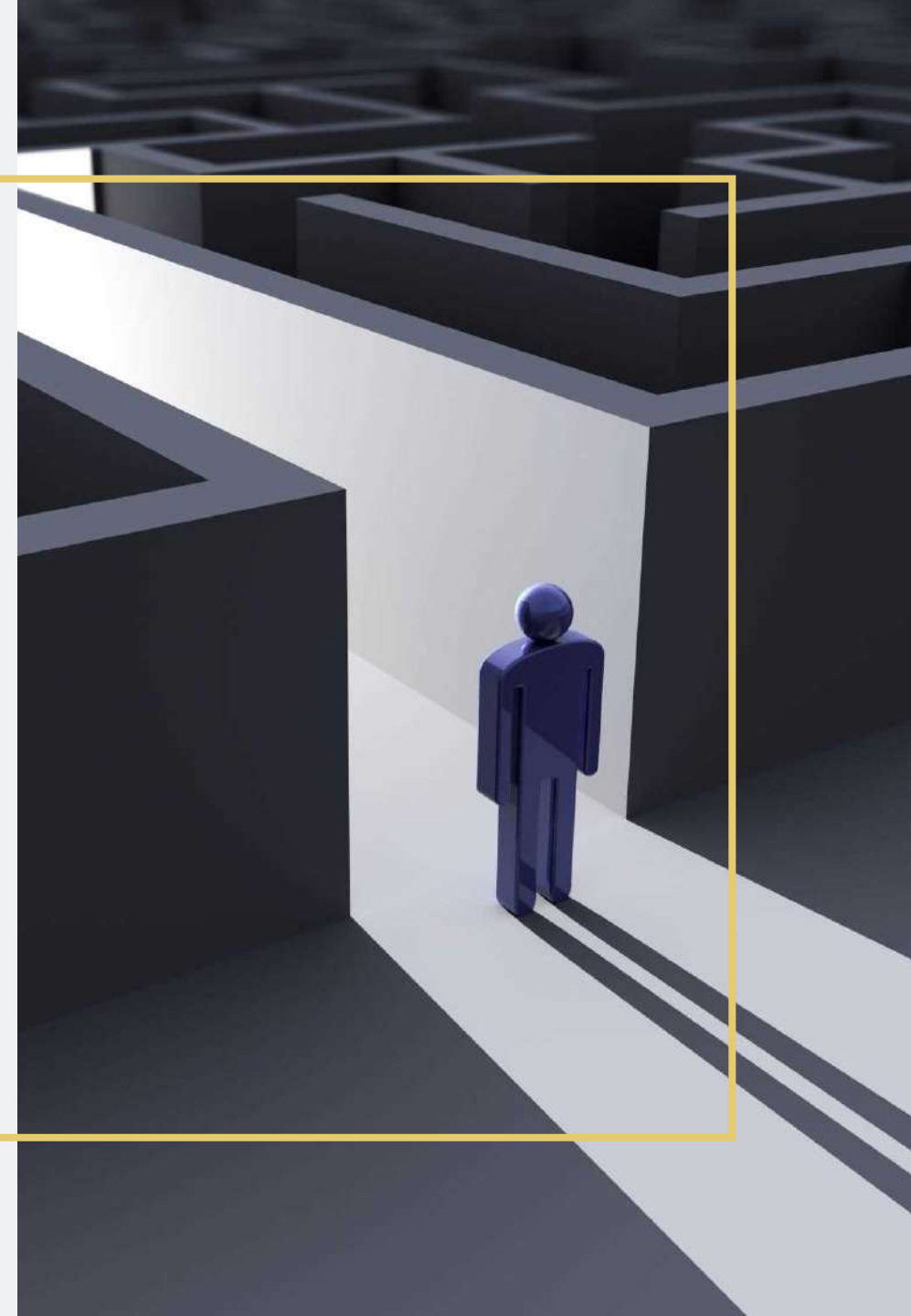
- Two aspects to consider: (i) deception (ii) the supernatural
- In each case, how do they add to the play?



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.