

Wyke Start

A-level English Literature

Summer holiday task

This task is to be completed over the summer holiday and brought back with you, printed on paper, to your first A-level English Literature lesson in September (unless your GCSE results are lower than you expected, in which case you should bring it to your enrolment interview as evidence of the quality of your work).

In an essay written in 1989, Paul Cantor suggested that Hamlet's character is a contradictory one. How does Shakespeare present contradictions in Hamlet's character and thoughts in the 'To be or not to be' soliloquy?

To answer this question, you should:

- choose 2 or 3 quotations that you feel show contradictions in Hamlet's character and thoughts in this speech
- write about these quotations, analysing how the language works and evaluating any literary devices used by Shakespeare
- explore contradictions in Hamlet's character and thoughts in the speech, and the ways in which Shakespeare presents them.

We expect you to:

- write accurately and clearly, using literary terminology AO1
- analyse parts of the text AO2
- respond to the question and to Paul Cantor's view. AO5

Your answer should take up no more than 1 side of A4 paper, typed in Size 12 font, with normal margins.

Stretch and Challenge

If you would like to challenge yourself further with this task, you could also:

- research the context (e.g. prevailing religious beliefs at the time Shakespeare was writing) and use this information as part of your answer AO3
If you do this, be sure to include a note at the bottom of your work citing your sources for research.
- think about other texts you've read that also present contradictions within characters, and mention these in your answer. AO4

If you choose to incorporate these elements, your answer should still take up no more than 1 side of A4 paper, typed in Size 12 font, with normal margins. Part of the challenge will be to get all of your ideas in, but remain concise!