

Name

Date

Period



English 12 –Hamlet Review Activities

Activity # 1 – Structuring a Shakespearean Tragedy

Directions: There are seven elements to the five-act Shakespearean tragedy. Study the elements and acts in which each are found, then complete the chart on the following page.

Act I: Exposition, Exciting Force, Rising Action

Act II: Rising Action

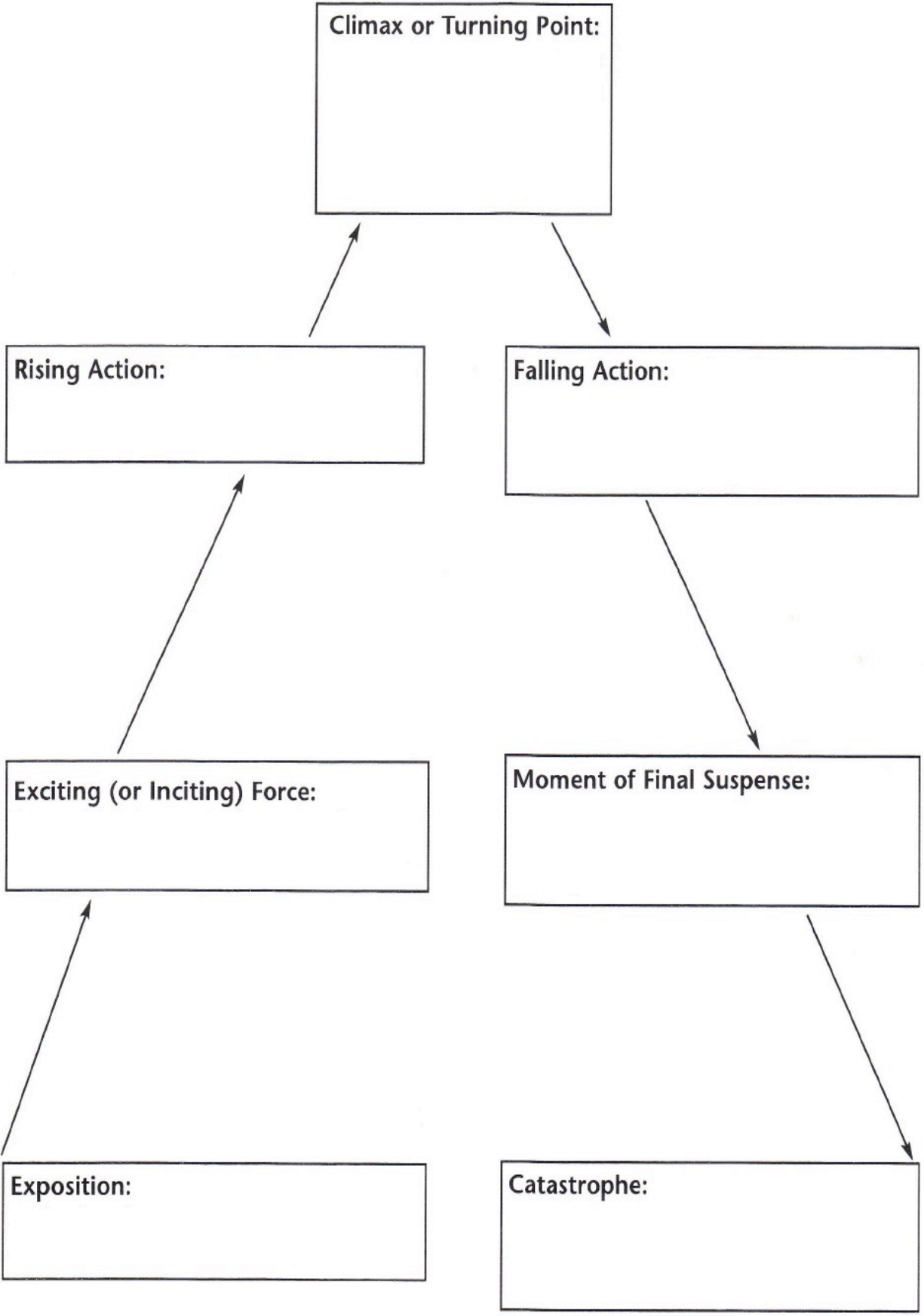
Act III: Rising Action. Climax, Falling Action

Act IV: Falling Action

Act V: Falling Action, Catastrophe

Elements defined:

1. **Exposition:** The general atmosphere, time, place, main characters, and opening conditions of the play.
2. **Exciting Force:** Something happens that starts the action of the play moving, usually in the first act.
3. **Rising Action:** This is a series of actions usually covering more than one act. During the rising action, the hero of the play (the protagonist) is the active force, trying to make things work out as he or she intended.
4. **Climax:** The protagonist reaches the peak of his or her power and a distinct change occurs in him or her as well as in the direction of the action. Things begin to go against the protagonist, who seems to be following a downward path.
5. **Falling Action:** This also covers several scenes and shows all the ways the main events are going against the main character. At this time, the antagonist begins to rise in power. The conflict between the protagonist and the antagonist becomes the essence of the play.
6. **Moment of Final Suspense:** Usually found in the fifth act of the play, the moment of final suspense has a particular function in the organization of the plot. Close to the end of the play, it is more significant to the protagonist than it is to the audience. It is the moment when things begin to look as if they will go the way of the protagonist again. He or she momentarily believes that tragedy will be averted.
7. **Catastrophe:** This is the complete downfall of the protagonist, either through death or some other devastating circumstance. If the protagonist is a villain, then the catastrophe will be seen by the audience as a good thing.



Activity # 2 – What Caused the Tragedy?

Directions: Consider each of the following factors and explain how each contributes to the tragedy of *Hamlet* by referencing both plot and character.

1. Fate: the inevitable working out of destiny

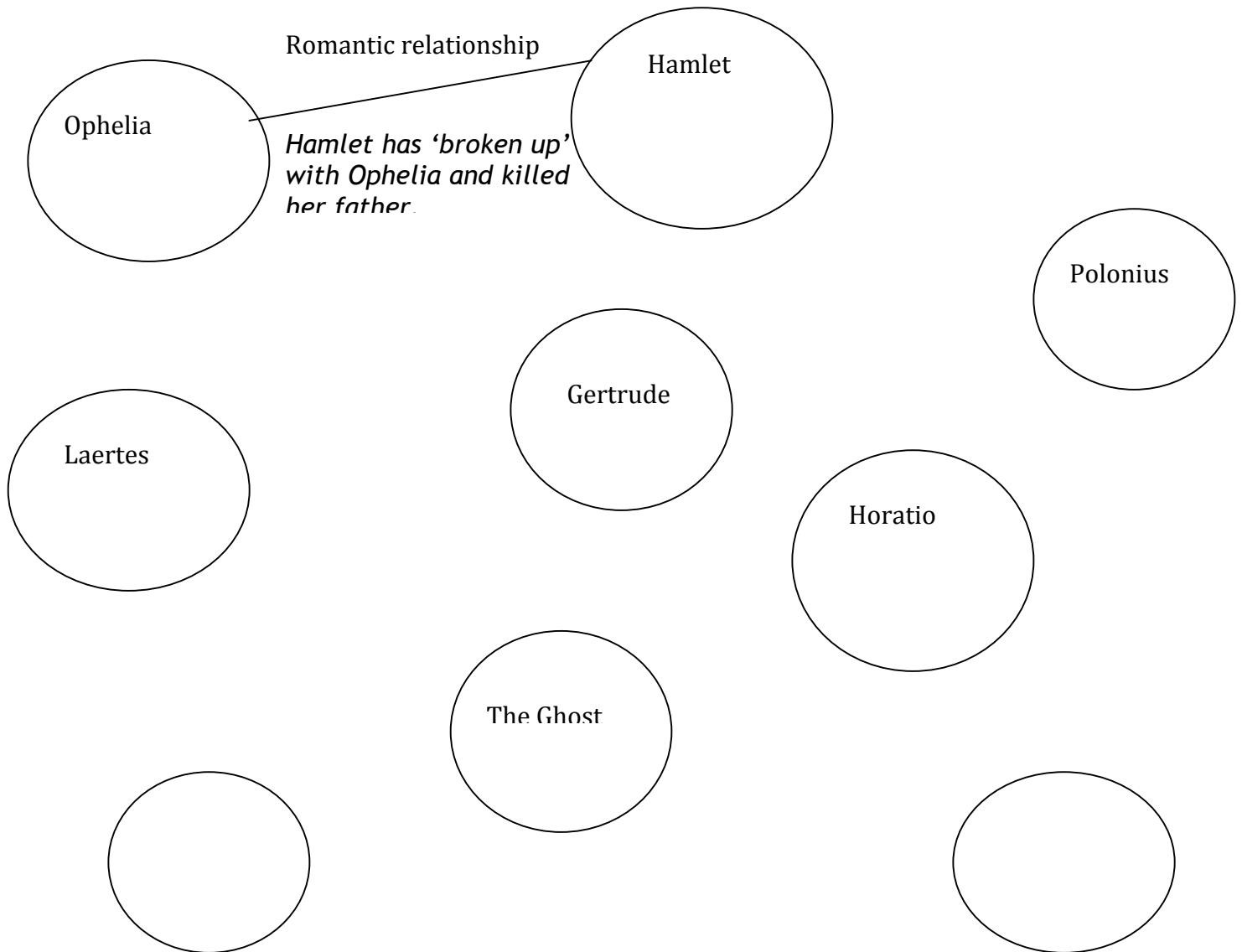
2. The Supernatural: ghostly intervention

3. The personality of Hamlet

4. The personality of Claudius

Activity # 3 - Character Connections and Conflicts

Directions: Draw lines connecting each character to the characters with whom they have a relationship or conflict. Describe the relationship or conflict as in the example below:



Activity # 4 – Character Foils

Many of the characters in *Hamlet* act as foils. A **foil** is a character that contrasts with the protagonist in order to highlight various features of that other character's personality, throwing these characteristics into sharper focus.

Directions: Determine the character traits that belong to Hamlet's foils and support your answers with evidence: references to the plot and the actions of the characters.

1. Hamlet has clever wit and Polonius is _____.
2. Hamlet is honest and Claudius is _____.
3. Hamlet is emotionally strong and Ophelia is _____.
4. Hamlet is a man of thought and Fortinbras is _____.
5. Hamlet has a sense of right and wrong and Laertes is _____.

Activity # 5 - Themes

Directions: Explain each of the following themes with evidence from the text (act/scene and line numbers). *See the last page of this packet for help!*

Revenge	Sexual, Moral, and Physical Corruption
Madness and Melancholy	Random Fortune or Divine Master Plan?

Activity # 6 - Quotable Quotes

Directions: Select a character from *Hamlet* and attempt to explain their character traits by quoting their dialogue or by quoting what other characters say about them. Then, explain the significance of these quotes.

Character: _____

Quote # 1 - Act and Scene _____

Significance:

Quote # 2 - Act and Scene _____

Significance:

Quote # 3 - Act and Scene _____

Significance:

Activity # 7 – “The Most Tolerable Sort of Revenge”

Directions: Read the following excerpt from an essay by Francis Bacon. Then, write a reply to Bacon that begins “In Hamlet’s case...” and argue in favor of Hamlet’s revenge.

Revenge is a kind of wild justice; which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong, putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon. And Solomon, I am sure, saith, *It is the glory of a man, to pass by an offence.* That which is past is gone, and irrevocable; and wise men have enough to do, with things present and to come; therefore they do but trifle with themselves, that labor in past matters. There is no man doth a wrong, for the wrong's sake; but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honor, or the like. Therefore why should I be angry with a man, for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong, merely out of ill-nature, why, yet it is but like the thorn or briar, which prick and scratch, because they can do no other. The most tolerable sort of revenge, is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy; but then let a man take heed, the revenge be such as there is no law to punish; else a man's enemy is still before hand, and it is two for one. Some, when they take revenge, are desirous, the party should know, whence it cometh. This is the more generous. For the delight seemeth to be, not so much in doing the hurt, as in making the party repent. But base and crafty cowards, are like the arrow that flieth in the dark. Cosmus, duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable; *You shall read* (saith he) *that we are commanded to forgive our enemies; but you never read, that we are commanded to forgive our friends.* But yet the spirit of Job was in a better tune: *Shall we* (saith he) *take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also?* And so of friends in a proportion. This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge, keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal, and do well. Public revenges are for the most part fortunate; as that for the death of Caesar; for the death of Pertinax; for the death of Henry the Third of France; and many more. But in private revenges, it is not so. Nay rather, vindictive persons live the life of witches; who, as they are mischievous, so end they infortunate.

In Hamlet’s case...

Activity # 8 – Old and New

Part I – What’s in a Name?

Directions: Create five alternative titles for *Hamlet*.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Part II – Shakespeare in Modern Times

Directions: Select a scene from *Hamlet* and explain how it could be transferred to a modern setting. Try to create a unique “world” for the story of *Hamlet*.

Act and Scene: _____

Activity # 9 - Hamlet's Madness

Directions: Answer the following question with references to the text in your answer.

-Is Hamlet actually mad or just pretending to be?

Activity # 10 - Hamlet's Delay

Directions: Answer the following question with references to the text in your answer.

-Hamlet is a son sworn to avenge his father's murder. Yet, not until the final moments of the play does he finally kill Claudius. Is Hamlet a procrastinator? Why or why not?