



NAME: _____ DATE: _____ CLASS PERIOD: _____

Teacher’s Case Study of Melancholy and Literary Analysis

- Where does Hamlet appear for the first time in the play? Act 1, scene 2
- After reviewing the scene where Hamlet first appears, determine the dramatic structure of the scene and explain your answer.
The scene provides the exposition of the play where characters are introduced and some key information is revealed.
- Hamlet is often called the “Melancholy Dane,” as he is thought to fit in perfectly with the description of a melancholic individual. Identify at least three key words/phrases in the scene that establish Hamlet’s melancholy. These may be words he speaks or descriptions about him by other characters.

Quotes about Hamlet’s melancholy	How is Shakespeare developing Hamlet as a melancholy character?
<i>King Claudius [to Hamlet]:...the clouds still hang on you? Hamlet:...I am too much l’ the sun</i>	<i>Hamlet’s dark mood or sadness—i.e., melancholy, is noted by other characters. Hamlet also affirms his light-loathing state.</i>
<i>Queen Gertrude [to Hamlet]:...cast thy nighted colour off. ... Hamlet:...my inky cloak...suits of solemn black...dejected...These but the trappings and the suits of woe.</i>	<i>Hamlet’s mother, the Queen describes Hamlet literally in dark clothes. Hamlet’s response to his mother, the Queen, has words associated with melancholy characteristics, while sounding very irritable.</i>
<i>King Claudius [to Hamlet]:...but to persever in obstinate condolement is a course of impious stubbornness...a heart unfortified, a mind impatient...</i>	<i>King Claudius describes Hamlet’s grief as unnatural, “unmanly” weakness, which establishes Hamlet’s melancholy as an ailment or something to be treated and changed.</i>
<i>Accept and review others as students report their findings</i>	

- The scene includes a soliloquy by Hamlet—“O, that this too too solid flesh would melt...for I must hold my tongue.” What internal struggles are introduced by this speech?
Hamlet describes his struggles with facing the human mortality/death/decay through his father’s death, as well as his mother remarrying so quickly after her husband’s death and even to his brother.