

Hamlet



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Designed for first year students, this innovative guide builds on the usual knowledge base of students beginning literary study in HE by focusing on the familiar characters but introducing more sophisticated analysis. Arguably Shakespeare's most famous play, few works have commanded so much critical attention in relation to 'character' as "Hamlet". Grappling with the characters of "Hamlet" - how they are formed, how they function in the play, and how we read them - is crucial to understanding both its complexity and its critical history. The study includes: an overview of "Hamlet", and of Shakespeare's approach to dramatic character; chapters addressing the character of "Hamlet" within a range of contexts: dramatic and generic, textual and performative; detailed analysis of the play's other characters, from the King and Queen to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern; engagement with key issues, from "Hamlet's" possible sources and analogues to the critical reception of its dramatic characters historically; a conclusion which suggests further links between character analysis in Hamlet and the play's broader ideas and concerns as a tragedy; and, a guide to selected secondary texts with a comprehensive bibliography. This is an ideal introduction for students looking to develop an advanced understanding of one of Shakespeare's greatest tragedies. "Character Studies" aims to promote sophisticated literary analysis through the concept of character. It demonstrates the necessity of linking character analysis to

texts' themes, issues and ideas, and encourages students to embrace the complexity of literary characters and the texts in which they appear. The series thus fosters close critical reading and evidence-based discussion, as well as an engagement with historical context, and with literary criticism and theory.

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