

# Example by StudyDriver

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## Hamlet Mental Illness Example

“The most dangerous thing when, you have a mental illness, is convincing yourself that you don’t have it” - Noah Hawley. This is exactly what Hamlet in the play by William Shakespeare did. This plays plot is based off of the death of King Hamlet, and his son Hamlet must come home to Denmark for his father’s funeral. Upon arriving home Hamlet finds that his uncle Claudius (King Hamlet’s brother) has married his mother and is now the king. The ghost of King Hamlet appears and reveals to Hamlet that Claudius had killed the king. Hamlet promises revenge to his father and this becomes his motive throughout the entirety of the play. Throughout the play Hamlet is seen insane by his actions . At first it is difficult to tell if he is actually mentally ill or if he is putting on an antic disposition. There is a lot of evidence to support that he is mentally ill, such as: being overly obsessed with the king, drastically changing his character through the entire play, and by the way other people view him during the play.

To start off, One of the signs of Hamlet’s mental illness is his actions throughout the entire play. In Act 3 Scene 1 King Claudius wants to spy on Hamlet, so he has Ophelia return Hamlet’s gifts to him. Meanwhile Claudius hides behind a two-way mirror to watch the interaction. Hamlet feels like he is being watched and becomes irrationally

angry, "Ophelia: O, help him, you sweet heavens! Hamlet: If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry" (Act 3 Scene 1 Lines 134-135) The obsession with Claudius is shown here because there was no reason for Hamlet to feel like anyone was listening to the conversation they were having. Hamlet asks where Claudius is when there is no significance in knowing that information. Another Example, is after Hamlet impulsively kills Polonius in Act 3 Scene 4. Gertrude and Hamlet begin to argue, and Hamlet sees his father's ghost. His mother does not see the ghost and begins to worry about Hamlet even more, "Gertrude. Alas, he's mad! Hamlet. Do you not come your tardy son to chide," ( Act 3 Scene 4 Lines 132-133) With only Hamlet seeing the ghost, this is significant in him being mentally ill. He starts becoming delusional and seeing things that aren't there. The first couple of times the ghost appears everybody can see him, but this time only Hamlet sees him. This shows that he is not really in touch with reality. Lastly, Hamlet shows his mental illness through his actions by trying to prove that Claudius is guilty by putting on a play. "Hamlet: Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood, And do such bitter business as the day Would quake to look on"(Act 3 scene 2 lines 381-383) The ghost of King Hamlet told his son to take revenge on Claudius. Hamlet didn't want to do so without making the king look guilty so he makes up an entire play to make him look guilty. This is a ridiculous place since you can not prove guilt just by looking at somebody's face while they watch a play. This is how Hamlet shows his mental illness by his actions through the duration of the play.

Another way he showed his mental illness, is through the things that he says. In Act 3 Scene 1 Hamlet goes into his "To be or not to be" soliloquy, "For in that sleep of death what dreams may come" (Act 3 Scene 1 Line 66) While Hamlet is going through this speech it sounds as if he is contemplating suicide. The specific line that was picked to show this says that he dreams of death. Which he would not do if he did not have some form of mental issues. Then in Act 3 he becomes enraged and wants to kill Claudius, but decides to do it at another time because Claudius was repenting "Hamlet: Now might I do it pat, now he is praying; And now I'll do't. And so he goes to heaven; And so am I revenged" ( Act 3 Scene 3 Lines 73-75) If Hamlet was sane he would not want to kill Claudius in general, but he also would not have put so much thought into if Claudius would go to Heaven or Hell after he was dead. By the end of the play Hamlet has even admitted to Laertes that he is mentally ill at times During the fencing match Hamlet and Laertes started talking and he admitted to Laertes that at times he was insane, "