

## *Hamlet*

### **Act I Activities**

1. Imagine that a daily court is issued recording the activities of the royal family. Write the court circular for one day in Act I.
2. Some people argue that the first line of any Shakespeare play gives very significant indications of what the play will be about. Deduce from Barnardo's first two words some of the themes of the play.
3. Suggestions of the disordered state of society and of individuals run through Act I: Scene 5, and Scene 4. Identify one or two moments in each scene which show evidence of disorder. Then find a way of representing this.
4. Politicians prepare a set of notes before making any major speech. Write notes (a series of brief, numbered points) that Claudius prepared for himself before his first speech in Scene 2.
5. Ophelia is on the receiving end of much advice from her brother and father. But what if the roles were reversed? As Ophelia, write eight to sixteen lines of advice to Laertes and Polonius. Would she use the same kinds of metaphor as her brother and father use?
6. Horatio has come to Denmark from Wittenberg University. He appears in four of the five scenes in Act I, and seems to know a great deal about state affairs (is he a Dane?). Remind yourself quickly of all he says in this act, and then write his account of all that has happened to him since he returned to Denmark?
7. Hamlet tells his friends that his future behavior may look very strange, even mad (scene 5). Brainstorm the reasons why you think Hamlet has decided to act as if he were mad.