**HAMLET CHARACTER LIST (courtesy of SparkNotes)**

**English III CP – McCook**

**Hamlet** -  The Prince of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the title character, and the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (a.k.a. main character or hero). About \_\_\_\_\_\_ years old at the start of the play, Hamlet is the son of Queen Gertrude and the late King Hamlet, and the nephew of the present king, Claudius. Hamlet is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, bitter, and cynical, full of hatred for his uncle’s scheming and disgust for his mother’s sexuality. An introspective and thoughtful young man who has studied at the University of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, he is also known for his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ character. Hamlet is often indecisive and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but at other times prone to rash and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ acts.

**Claudius** -  The new \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Denmark, Hamlet’s uncle, and the play’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (a.k.a. villain of the play) Claudius is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, ambitious politician, driven by his sexual appetites and his lust for power, but he occasionally shows signs of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and human feeling—his love for Gertrude, for instance, seems sincere.

**Gertrude** -  The Queen of Denmark, Hamlet’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, recently married to Claudius. Gertrude loves Hamlet deeply, but she is a shallow, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ woman who seeks affection and status more urgently than moral rectitude or truth.

**Polonius** -  The Lord Chamberlain of Claudius’s court, a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ conniving old man. Polonius is the father of Laertes and Ophelia.

**Horatio** -  Hamlet’s close friend, who studied with the prince at the university in Wittenberg. Horatio is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and helpful to Hamlet throughout the play. After Hamlet’s death, Horatio remains alive to tell \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Ophelia** -  Polonius’s daughter, a beautiful young woman with whom Hamlet has been in love. Ophelia is a sweet and innocent young girl, who obeys \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and her brother, Laertes. Dependent on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to tell her how to behave, she gives in to Polonius’s schemes to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hamlet. She remains a maidenly character throughout the play.

**Laertes** -  Polonius’s son and Ophelia’s brother, a young man who spends much of the play in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Passionate and quick to action, Laertes is clearly a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for the reflective Hamlet.

**Fortinbras** -  The young Prince of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, whose father the king (also named Fortinbras) was killed by Hamlet’s father (also named Hamlet). Now Fortinbras wishes to attack Denmark to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ his father’s honor, making him another foil for Prince Hamlet.

**The Ghost** -  The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Hamlet’s recently deceased father. The ghost, who claims to have been murdered by Claudius, calls upon Hamlet to avenge him. However, it is not entirely certain whether the ghost is what it appears to be, or whether it is something else. Hamlet speculates that the ghost might be a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sent to deceive him and tempt him into murder, and the question of what the ghost is or where it comes from is never definitively resolved.

**Rosencrantz and Guildenstern** -  Two slightly bumbling \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, former friends of Hamlet from Wittenberg, who are summoned by Claudius and Gertrude to discover the cause of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Osric** -  The foolish courtier who summons Hamlet to his \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ with Laertes.

**Voltimand and Cornelius** -  Courtiers whom Claudius sends to Norway to persuade the king to prevent Fortinbras from attacking.

**Marcellus and Bernardo** -  The officers who first see the ghost walking the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the castle in Elsinore and who summon Horatio to witness it. Marcellus is present when Hamlet first encounters the ghost.

**Francisco** -  A soldier and guardsman at the castle in Elsinore.

**Reynaldo** -  Polonius’s servant, who is sent to France by Polonius to check up on and spy on Laertes.