Hamlet Vocabulary – Pre-reading List

English III CP – McCook

**Context:**

The following vocabulary words are useful for discussing and writing about William Shakespeare’s famous play *Hamlet*. If you want to look intelligent and informed when discussing the play—and you do—draw from this list. Most of these words are not obsolete Shakespearean words, but words that appear frequently in modern conversations and texts; hence, knowing these vocabulary words will serve you well beyond our study of the play. (Note: I will ask you to learn very few of those obsolete Shakespearean words—only an occasional word that is essential to understanding a key part of the play.)

**Directions:**

Look up the following 20 words in a dictionary (online or otherwise) *before* we begin reading the play. Write down the part of speech and a definition. Sentences are helpful, but not required here.

melancholy

bitter

cynical

introspective

brooding

hesitant

rash

impulsive

calculating

shallow

frail

pompous

conniving

foil

avenge

specter

bumbling

courtier

summoned

ramparts