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B Block
Cronin AP Lit

To Have Proved Most Royal

At the end of Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, tragedy strikes, and Hamlet dies. Had Hamlet's father died naturally, and Hamlet ascended to the throne, Hamlet would have been a good king. He is very clever, he is capable of realizing that he does not do everything in the best way possible, and he cares about people, which are all important qualities for a good leader.

After hearing about his father's death from his father's ghost, Hamlet decides to see for himself whether or not what the ghost said was true and puts on a play reenacting his father's death, to try to elicit a reaction from his uncle. In preparation for the play, Hamlet realizes that he is not doing enough to avenge his father's death, showing how Hamlet is self-aware and capable of reprimanding himself: "Why, what an ass am I! This is most brave, / That I, the son of a dear [father] murdered ... Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words / And fall a-cursing like a very drab" (2.2.611-615). Hamlet compares himself to an "ass" and a cursing "whore", showing he recognizes that he has not actually done anything yet. The ability to recognize one's faults is a valuable trait in a king because being able to understand one's own shortcomings helps put things in perspective.

We also see that Hamlet is very intelligent. After learning of how his father died, Hamlet pretends to go insane. When he meets Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and they say they're there to see him, he replies, "I know the good king and queen have sent for you" (2.2.303-304), showing that he knows exactly why they're there, and he proceeds to pretend to be crazy around them, too. This may not have been the most effective tactic for getting close to the king, but it

worked: his uncle did not think much of it until the play. Hamlet plans the play to catch the conscience of his uncle by re-enacting his father's death and seeing how his uncle responds. As Hamlet predicted, his uncle rises, "frighted with false fire" (3.2.292), and he successfully proves to himself and Horatio that the king murdered Hamlet's father.

Hamlet's father is the one person Hamlet very clearly cared for. He makes it evident that he believes his father was a good man when he exclaims, "So excellent a king, that was to this / Hyperion to a satyr" (1.2.143-144), comparing his father to a god and his uncle to what is almost an animal, proving that Hamlet cares about his father. Hamlet also cares about Ophelia: at Ophelia's burial, after Laertes speaks about how he wants to kill Hamlet and implies that Hamlet did not love Ophelia, Hamlet starts fighting with Laertes. After they are forced to stop, Hamlet responds, "I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers / Could not with all their quantity of love / Make up my sum" (5.1.285-287). The fact that he responded to Laertes saying Hamlet did not love Ophelia in this way shows that that remark was hurtful to Hamlet and that Hamlet did love Ophelia. Hamlet's ability to care about people is a good trait for a king to have.

Some people worry that Hamlet would not make a good king because of his instability. However, this is not a fault of Hamlet's, but rather his situation. Hamlet is initially upset that his mother remarried his uncle. He makes this clear when he refuses to pretend to be happy: "Not so, my lord; I am too much in the sun" (1.2.69). Hamlet makes a pun on "sun" and "son", revealing that Hamlet is stressed about being forced to act happy/like his uncle's son, but is still intelligent and witty enough to make puns. After learning about his father's ghost from Horatio and Marcellus, Hamlet goes a little bit insane and runs off with the ghost against his friends' warnings. When he meets his father's ghost, he learns that his uncle caused his father's death.

However, had he not been in a stressful situation already, Hamlet would probably not have lost his mind and run after the ghost alone. His actions, in this case, were the result of his situation.

Hamlet is an intelligent, self-aware, caring person who lets his emotions get the best of him. This does not mean that he would not be a good king, since most people dealing with loss have a hard time, and Hamlet has an especially hard time with his mother remarrying his uncle. Had Hamlet not been in this situation, he would have been a good king and been nicer to Ophelia and others around him.

Analytical Essay Rubric

Steven,

Your final paragraph has some really strong analysis of diction choices. Your exploration of the “sun” pun is quite interesting. Organization and editing are also strengths here. To reach the next level, push to develop your paragraphs with multiple quotes and enhanced analysis. Nice job working hard to vary your word choice and dig in with a difficult play.

The “A” Essay...

- Provides a clearly articulated and insightful central argument (Thesis)
- Has topic sentences clearly connecting each paragraph to the central argument
- Smoothly incorporates compelling textual evidence
- Contains thoughtful analysis that explores **HOW** the evidence supports a line of reasoning (could include looking at diction, syntax, figurative language)
- Closes gracefully, considers the “so what?”
- Demonstrates a thorough and sophisticated understanding of the text
- Is clearly organized
- Follows the rules of formal, analytical writing
- Is a polished, edited piece.

The “B” Essay...

- Offers a specific central argument
- Has topic sentences that direct the focus of each paragraph
- Analyzes relevant textual evidence in order to develop its argument
- Considers how the evidence supports a line of reasoning (could include looking at diction, syntax, figurative language)
- Contains a clear closing paragraph

- Demonstrates a sound understanding of the text
- Is organized
- Follows the rules of formal, analytical writing
- Contains a few mechanical errors

The “C” Essay...

- Contains a vague central argument
- Slips into plot summary rather than analysis of the text
- Does not demonstrate a complete understanding of the text
- Lacks a clear organization of ideas
- Does not follow the rules of formal, analytical writing
- Contains significant mechanical errors

The “F” Essay...

- Is plagiarized