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EN40SC

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Ms. Smith ✓

### The Friendship Between Hamlet and Horatio ✓

Friendship is a state of mutual trust and support between two people. In the play *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, Hamlet learns that Horatio is the only person that looks out for him right until his death. Just like every teenager, Hamlet realizes the negative friendships in his life that he needs to release. However, Horatio is different and proves his trust and loyalty time after time. Hamlet and Horatio's friendship is made up of guidance, reliability, and loyalty. ✓

A key component in the play is Horatio's ability to give guidance to Hamlet. It becomes clear that Hamlet leads with his emotions whereas Horatio is more rational. These are two very different personality traits, but it was a balance that their friendship needed and overall it helped Hamlet stay sane. The first time Horatio gave Hamlet advice was when Hamlet wanted to follow the ghost that they had just witnessed (1.4.64-78). Horatio explains that the ghost could be leading him to the sea or even off a cliff and he brings up the possibility to Hamlet that he could witness something that ends up driving him to insanity. Not only was Horatio giving Hamlet truthful guidance, but he was also looking out for him and his safety. Even after Hamlet ignores the advice given, Horatio decides to follow him just in case he needs help (1.4.67-92). Another scenario was when Hamlet informs Horatio that he is going to battle Laertes in fencing. Horatio states, "You will lose this wager, my lord" (5.2.200). This was Horatio reacting with the reality of the situation because he knows that Laertes is better at the task. Hamlet brushes off



Horatio's concern and feels good about his fencing abilities. Horatio then attempts to stop Hamlet once more by saying, "If your mind dislike anything, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither and say you are not fit" (5.2.208-209). Horatio tells Hamlet that if his conscience is telling him not to do it, then obey it. Again, Horatio is looking out for his friend's best interest and gives intelligent advice about the situation Hamlet's in. Not only is their friendship made up of guidance, but also reliability.

Throughout the play one can see how easily Horatio and Hamlet can rely on one another. Soon after the ghost mentioned to Hamlet that his father was supposedly killed by Claudius, his uncle, he learned that in order to get his father out of purgatory, he would need to kill Claudius. Before Hamlet acted, he needed to see if his uncle really did the crime. Hamlet did not trust his own instincts because he thought his mind would believe what he wanted instead of the reality of the situation. Therefore, he put his trust in Horatio by asking him to observe Claudius's reaction while they watched a play that revolved around a murder. This showed how Hamlet could depend on Horatio by letting him in on the new about his father's death, and overall trusting Horatio's judgment over his own. Horatio accepted this task gratefully (3.2.86-88). Hamlet is an overthinker, but Horatio is the person in his life that brings him back to reality and to think logically. Another occasion when reliability is evident was when Hamlet sent a letter to only Horatio informing that he was abducted by pirates and that he made a deal with them and is returning to Denmark (4.6.12-30). He also asks Horatio to give personal letters to the King that are from Hamlet. This shows how Hamlet can confide in Horatio, even from across seas. At this point in the play, Horatio is the only reliable person to Hamlet, therefore he was the only one informed of Hamlet's return. Reliability is a key attribute to their friendship but most importantly they have loyalty towards each other throughout the entire play.

Horatio stays loyal to Hamlet even with the chaos that his friend is experiencing. Hamlet quickly learned that his other two "friends", Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, were not dependable. Hamlet questioned the reason to why the two of them showed up in Denmark suddenly, and soon came to the



realization that they didn't come to visit Hamlet, but were sent by the King instead (2.2.278-281). This was the first time in the play where Hamlet realized that they were not loyal friends. As the play progresses, Hamlet befriends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern because of their betrayal and lost trust. Hamlet explains to Horatio, "That, on the supervise, no leisure bated, No, not to stay the grinding of the axe, My head should be struck off" (5.2.23-25). The two unfaithful friends were planning to get Hamlet executed which showed that their allegiance was with the King. This realization ensured Hamlet that he released these negative people in his life for the better. The loyalty between Horatio and Hamlet lasted even after Hamlet's death. As Hamlet is slowly dying from poison, Horatio picks up the glass of poisoned wine and is prepared to take his life (5.2.334-336). He does not want to live without his loyal friend. Hamlet stops him by saying, "Horatio, I am dead; Thou livest; report me and my cause aright to the unsatisfied (5.2.331-333). He asked Horatio to tell Hamlet's story to everyone considering that he was very loved by the community and feels that he owes it to them. Hamlet also tells Horatio that if he ever loved him then he would stay in this harsh world a little longer to finish his last favor (5.2.339-342). Horatio shows his loyalty to Hamlet until his very last breath. Even in this moment of sorrow, Horatio did not act out of uncontrollable emotion, but a sense of honour and duty. This was a trait that Hamlet admired within Horatio, and in his last moment on earth, he became a little more like his idol by accepting his fate and appreciating the life he lived. Horatio was the only friend, or person, that remained loyal to Hamlet until the very end. ✓

Rosencrantz  
Guildenstern

Hamlet and Horatio's friendship is one to admire in today's society. Horatio kept alongside Hamlet through all the commotion that was occurring in his life and was ultimately the outside observer to all the madness. Having someone who is not involved in the drama and who has a hold of their stability makes for a stronger friendship. It allows to see a view from a different perspective and can help one to realize how crucial it is to have a loyal friend who is there in times of need. There was no



other relationship in the play *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare, that demonstrated guidance, reliability, and loyalty more than the friendship between Hamlet and Horatio.







## Works Cited

Mabillard, Amanda. "Shakespeare's Horatio: An Analysis of Hamlet's Friend Horatio."  
*Shakespeare Online*, 15 Aug. 2008, [www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/hamlet/horatiocharacter.html](http://www.shakespeare-online.com/plays/hamlet/horatiocharacter.html). *Date of access?*

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Nelson Harcourt, 2003.

Need  
action



Abby R

## Sample: Identifying Your Writing Variables



Day 2

### Identifying Your Writing Variables

Think of the writing variables like pieces of a puzzle. Plan your writing variables for your written text about *Topic* in the graphic organizer below. If you decide to change your writing variables during the writing process, please indicate the changes on your Final Copy.

**Form**  
Expository  
Essay

**Purpose**  
To see the importance  
of having a  
loyal friend  
that you look  
up to and go to  
for guidance

**Central Idea**  
The friendship  
between Hamlet and  
Horatio and the  
qualities that make  
it a healthy friendship

**Audience**  
People who need  
advice on friendship  
and to know  
qualities to look  
for.  
Teenagers who need  
to see the difference  
between positive and  
negative friends.

**Context**  
At school on a  
bulletin board  
for qualities to look  
for a healthy friendship

Sample: Reflecting on Your Writing Task

Abby R

Day 3 of 4



Reflecting on Your Writing Task

Using specific reference(s) to your writing variables and/or your draft, explain one or more

5 marks

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- The information I included in my text is effective for my purpose because . . .
- The advantages of my choice of form are . . .
- My style of writing is effective in capturing and maintaining my audience's attention by . . .
- The context in which my audience will experience the text is important because . . .
- The central idea of my text is important for my chosen audience because . . .

The central idea is important for my audience because it demonstrates qualities to look for in a stable and faithful friendship. Horatio and Hamlet share different personalities, traits but at the end of the day the balance of their personalities is what they need. I wrote in my essay, "Horatio is looking out for his friend's best interest and gives me helpful advice about the situation Hamlet's in." Guidance is something that Hamlet looks for in Horatio and it helps Hamlet stay sane when given that advice. Throughout all the madness in the play, Hamlet is the only one to keep his head in a clear space and give thoughtful advice. Another example is when I talked about Hamlet potentially killing himself because he doesn't want to live in a world without Hamlet (pg. 3). This showed a sign of loyalty that Hamlet does possess. Keep towards his dear friend Hamlet desired him to live and Hamlet kept his duty by keeping Hamlet happy by living and telling his story. Horatio showed signs of guidance, reliability, and loyalty right until the end of the play. These are the three qualities I talked about in my essay and relate to be important qualities in my everyday friendships. Enjoy!!!