12 - GET THEE TO A NUNNERY

How is Hamlet affected by Ophelia breaking up with him?

WHAT YOU NEED

- Some pieces of paper, or a notebook and something to write with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to visit this page and watch this clip.
- A copy of Act 3 Scene 1 from Hamlet, to read either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Visit the RSC Learning Zone here. Read the overview and the instructions to 'look'. Click 'Read the scene and explore' to read the full script.
- Polonius and Claudius are watching from behind an arras. Ask yourself: Why does Hamlet suddenly ask Ophelia where her father is? What might happen to prompt Hamlet's question? How might he feel if he realizes they are being watched?
- Imagine you are Hamlet. Read all of his lines out loud, and physically hit your chest every time you say something which you think would hurt Ophelia.
- Read Hamlet's lines again and select those words which are full of emotion. Try to sum up the emotion of these words in just one word. Write them down until you have a list of all the emotions Hamlet feels during this scene.
- Watch the film 'play scene in rehearsal and performance' (from 0.40 seconds into the end). As you watch, see if you can spot the emotions on your list.
- Ask yourself: How does Hamlet's behaviour make you feel? Does Shakespeare want his audience to take a specific side?
- Visit the Hamlet Schools Broadcast Q and A here (from 17.10-19.10) to hear Paapa Essideu interpret what Hamlet goes through in this scene.

EXTENSION

- Go back to the script and look at 'read and explore'.
- Read aloud Ophelia's speech at the end of this section.
- Put the speech into your own words. Some of this has been done for you, as an example.
- Imagine you are a friend of Ophelia. What questions would you have for her? Write them down.
- Now imagine that you are Ophelia. Speak the speech as if you are explaining what has happened to your friend.
- Ask yourself: If you were Ophelia's friend, what would your advice be for her?