

13 - AN ANTIC DISPOSITION

Is Hamlet mentally ill or pretending to be?

WHAT YOU NEED

- Some pieces of paper, or a notebook and something to write or draw with.
- A computer with internet connection, ready to play [this clip](#).
- A copy of Acts 1-3 from Hamlet may be useful to refer to, either on the page or onscreen.

ACTIVITY

- Visit the Hamlet Schools Broadcast Q and A [here](#) and watch from 13.45-15.00, titled 'putting on an antic disposition.'
- Hamlet pretends to be mad, to try and find out the truth.
- Go back to the Hamlet Schools Broadcast Q and A and watch from 10.30-11.30.
- Paapa Essideu believes that Hamlet is suffering from deep grief after the death of his father.
- Think about the first three Acts of the play. Make a list of all the things that happen that could affect Hamlet's mental health.
- Make a list of all the things that other characters say about Hamlet's mental health or behaviour.
- Make a list of all the things that Hamlet does.
- Make a list of everything that Hamlet says about his feelings or his state of mind.
- Take a fresh piece of paper and write Hamlet's name in the middle. Imagining this paper is Hamlet's mind, start to fill the page with words or drawings from your lists. If you think something or someone is important to Hamlet, place it nearer their name. You can make this map as full and colourful as you like.
- Think about how you would share your mind map with others. What have you found out? What conclusions do you draw?
- Record yourself presenting your mind map. Finish with a summary statement, that addresses the question, 'Is Hamlet mentally ill or pretending to be?'

EXTENSION

- Design a costume for Hamlet in his 'antic disposition' for a production of the play set in 2020. You could include personal props that Hamlet could use to make others believe he is mentally ill. Think about the colours, textures, materials and imagery that you could use from contemporary culture, and label your design to include these ideas.