

17 - CLAUDIUS' CONFESSION

Why does Claudius murder his brother?

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 play [this clip](#).

ACTIVITY

- Visit the RSC Learning Zone [here](#). Watch the film from the beginning to 0.41.
- Read the information about this key scene and click 'read the scene and explore' to see the script.
- Read the speech aloud, from the beginning to the line 'may one be pardoned and retain the offence?' Every time there is a question mark, make a gesture to go with that moment.
- Watch the film from 0.41-2.02. Clarence Smith, who played Claudius in the RSC 2016 production describes the audience as a 'sounding board' for the character.
- Look at the paraphrase to make sure that you are confident with what the words mean. Go back through the speech and imagine that Claudius is speaking directly to you. Speak aloud your answers to the questions that the character asks.
- Watch the film from 2.02 to the end. How does Claudius come across in this version? Do you have sympathy for him or not? Why? Note down our thoughts.
- Claudius says he murdered his brother for 'My crown, mine own ambition and my Queen'.
- An actor who plays Claudius must decide in detail what motivates him. Write lists of all the benefits which you think Claudius gets from being king, realising his ambition and being married to Gertrude. Which would you say is his most important motivator?
- Watch the Hamlet Schools' broadcast Q and A with the actors from our 2016 production of the play [here](#) (from 4.15-5.10. and from 12.00-13.10).
- Ask yourself: Do you agree with the interpretation of Claudius' relationship with Gertrude that Clarence talks about? How would you describe their relationship?
- Watch the Hamlet Schools' broadcast from 12.00-13.10.
- Ask yourself: Do you agree with the reasons that Clarence gives for why Claudius murders his brother? What would you say are his reasons?

EXTENSION

- Visit the RSC Learning Zone character analysis page [here](#) and click on 'interrogate Claudius'.
- Read the information, research the suggested scenes, and fill in the grid to analyse why Claudius murders his brother.

