

SAT Vocabulary Study
Hamlet by William Shakespeare

Note: The words, definitions, and quotations in the first section are given in order as they appear in the play. Some words chosen from the play are not the same parts of speech as the SAT vocabulary words. In these cases, a second definition is given and the part of speech is indicated before the quotation.

Act I

adulterate
auspicious
brazen
enmity
obsequious

obstinate
peevish
ponderous
precept
shrill

1. **brazen** (BRAY zen) *adj.* shameless, insolent, disrespectful

derivatives: brazenly, brazenness, brazenfaced

Act I scene i

“Good now, sit down, and tell me he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch
So nightly toils the subject of the land,
And why such daily cast of **brazen** cannon
And foreign mart for implements of war;
Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task
Does not divide the Sunday from the week.”

2. **shrill** (SHRIL) *adj.* high-pitched or piercing in sound quality

derivatives: shriller, shrillest, shrillness, shrilly

Act I, scene i

“I have heard
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,
Doth with his lofty and **shrill**-sounding throat
Awake the god of day; and at his warning,
Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
Th’ extravagant and erring spirit hies
To his confine; and of the truth herein
This present object made probation.”

3. **auspicious** (aw SPISH us) *adj.* favorable, promising success, encouraging, opportune

derivatives: auspiciously, auspiciousness

Act I, scene ii

“Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
Th’ imperial jointress to this warlike state,
Have we, as ’twere with a defeated joy,
With an **auspicious**, and a dropping eye,
With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
In equal scale weighing delight and dole,
Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr’d
Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
With this affair along.”

4. **obsequious** (ub SEE kwee us) *adj.* overly attentive, showing servile compliance or deference

derivatives: obsequiously, obsequiousness

Act I, scene ii

“Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father;
But you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his, and the survivor bound
In filial obligation for some term
To do **obsequious** sorrow.”

5. **obstinate** (OB stuh nit) *adj.* unyielding regardless of reason or logic, stubbornly adhering to one’s attitude or purpose

derivatives: obstinacy, obstinance, obstinately

Act I, scene ii

“But to persevere
In **obstinate** condolment is a course
Of impious stubbornness.”

6. **peevish** (PEE vish) *adj.* fretful, obstinate, showing annoyance, irritation, or bad mood

derivatives: peevishly, peevishness, peeve

Act I, scene ii

“Tis unmanly grief;
It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
An understanding simple and unschool’d;
For what we know must be, and is as common
As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
Why should we in our **peevish** opposition
Take it to heart?”

7. **precept** (PREE sept) *n.* a rule guiding conduct or imposing a standard, principle

derivatives: precepts, preceptor, preception

Act I, scene iii

“And these few **precepts** in thy memory
Look thou character.”

8. **ponderous** (PON dur us) *adj.* very heavy, unwieldy from weight, awkward due to size

derivatives: ponderously, ponderousness

Act I, scene iv

“Give thy thoughts no tongue,
Nor any unproportion’d thought his act.
Let me not burst in ignorance, but tell
Why thy canoniz’d bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulcher
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn’d,
Hath op’d his **ponderous** and marble jaws
To cast thee up again.”

9. **adulterate** (uh DUL ter ate) *v.* to debase or make impure by adding lesser substances; to corrupt; *adj.* impure or corrupt

derivatives: adulter, adulteration, adulterating

Act I, scene v (adj.)

“Ay, that incestuous, that **adulterate** beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts —
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
So to seduce!”

10. **enmity** (EN muh tee) *n.* absolute hatred, ill-will, animosity, antagonism

derivative: enmities

Act I, scene v

“Sleeping within my orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
With juice of cursed hebona in a vial,
And in the porches of my ears did pour
The leperous distilment; whose effect
Holds such an **enmity** with blood of man
That swift as quicksilver it courses through
The natural gates and alleys of the body,
And with a sudden vigour it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood.”

Act II

epitaph
gratis
lecher
ominous
paragon

potent
promontory
quaint
vouchsafe
wanton

1. **wanton** (WAHN tun) *adj.* immoral, lewd, deliberate without a motive, done maliciously
derivatives: wantonly, wantonness

Act II, scene i

“But if’t be he I mean, he’s very wild
Addicted so and so’; and there put on him
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank
As may dishonour him—take heed of that;
But, sir, such **wanton**, wild, and usual slips
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.”

2. **quaint** (KWAYNT) *adj.* unusual in character or appearance, having an old-fashioned attractiveness; **quaintly** *adv.* in an unusual but not unpleasant manner

derivatives: quaintly, quaintness

Act II, scene i (adv.)

“That’s not my meaning. But breathe his faults so **quaintly**
That they may seem the taints of liberty,
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood,
Of general assault.”

3. **vouchsafe** (VOUCH safe) *v.* to grant or give by favor, graciousness, or condescension
derivatives: vouchsafes, vouchsafed, vouchsafing

Act II, scene ii

“I entreat you both
That, being of so young days brought up with him,
And since so neighbour’d to his youth and haviour,
That you **vouchsafe** your rest here in our court
Some little time; so by your companies
To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather
So much as from occasion you may glean,
Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus
That, open’d, lies within our remedy.”

4. **promontory** (PROM un tore ee) *n.* land or rock projecting into a body of water

derivatives: promontories, promontoried

Act II, scene ii

“I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all
My mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed, it goes so
heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth,
seems to me a sterile **promontory**; this most excellent canopy,
the air, look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestic
roof fretted with golden fire—why, it appeareth no other thing
to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.”

5. **paragon** (PAIR uh gon) *n.* a model of excellence or perfection

derivative: paragonize, paragoned

Act II, scene ii

“What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in
faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how
like an angel! In apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world,
the **paragon** of animals!”

6. **gratis** (GRAH tis) *adv.* without charge or payment, free, complimentary

derivatives: gratitude, gratuitous

Act II, scene ii

“He that plays the king shall be welcome—his Majesty shall have tribute
of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover
shall not sigh **gratis**; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the
clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o’ th’ sere; and the
lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for’t.”

7. **ominous** (OM uh nus) *adj.* threatening, portending evil or harm, foreboding

derivatives: ominously, ominousness

Act II, scene ii

“The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the **ominous** horse,
Hath now this dread and black complexion smear’d
With heraldry more dismal.”

8. **epitaph** (EP uh taf) *n.* an inscription in memory about the person buried at the site, a short poem in praise of a deceased person

derivatives: epitapher, epitaphed, epitaphic

Act II, scene ii

“After your death you were better have a
bad **epitaph** than their ill report while you live.”

9. **lecher** (LECH ur) *n.* one who indulges excessively in sexual activity or in lewdness

derivations: lechery, lecherousness, lecherously

Act II, scene ii

“Bloody bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, **lecherous**, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!”

10. **potent** (POTE unt) *adj.* powerful, having a strong effect

derivatives: potency, potentness

Act II scene ii

“The spirit that I have seen
May be a devil; and the devil hath power
T’ assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
As he is very **potent** with such spirits,
Abuses me to damn me.”

Act III

afoot
bulwark
clemency
conceit
extant

gilded
insolence
jaded
paradoxical
pithy

1. **insolence** (IN suh luns) *n.* insulting, rude or contemptuous behavior or speech
derivatives: insolent, insolently, insolentness

Act III, scene i

“For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
Th’ oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,
The pangs of despis’d love, the law’s delay,
The **insolence** of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of th’ unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin?”

2. **pithy** (PITH ee) *adj.* concise and meaningful; **pith** *n.* the important or essential part; essence, core

derivatives: pithier, pithiest, pith

Act III, scene i (n.)

“Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great **pith** and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.”

3. **paradoxical** (pair uh DOKS uh kul) *adj.* something that appears false or contradictory but is actually correct; **paradox** *n.* a self-contradictory proposition

derivatives: paradoxes, paradoxically

Act III, scene (n.)

“Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a **paradox**, but now the time gives it proof.”

4. **afoot** (uh FOOT) *adv.* developing or in the process of happening, in the process of being carried out

derivatives: none

Act III, scene ii

“I prithee, when thou seest that act **afoot**,
Even with the very comment of thy soul
Observe my uncle.”

5. **clemency** (KLEM un see) *n.* leniency, an act or deed of showing leniency or mercy

derivatives: clemencies, clement, clemently

Act III, scene ii

“For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your **clemency**,
We beg your hearing patiently.”

6. **jaded** (JAY did) *adj.* weary from overuse, dissipated, worthless; **jade** *n.* a disreputable or ill-tempered woman

derivatives: jadedly, jading, jadish

Act III, scene ii (n.)

“Let the gall’d **jade** winch; our
Withers are unwrung.”

7. **extant** (EK stunt) *adj.* still in existence, not destroyed or lost

derivatives: none

Act III, scene ii

“The story is **extant**, and written in very choice Italian.”

8. **gilded** (GIL did) *adj.* covered with gold or a golden color, having a background of wealth

derivatives: gild, gilding, gilder

Act III, scene iii

“In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence’s **gilded** hand may shove by justice,
And oft ‘tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law; but ‘tis not so above.”

9. **bulwark** (BOOL wark) *n.* a strong defense or something that defends, protection from outside danger, a fortification

derivatives: bulwarks, bulwarking,

Act III, scene iv

“That it is proof and **bulwark** against sense.”

10. **conceit** (kun SEET) *n.* a fancy; whim; imagination, an elaborate, far-fetched or extended metaphor

derivatives: conceited, conceitedly

Act III, scene iv

“O, step between her and her fighting soul
Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.”

Act IV

abate
chaste
conjecture
convocation
crave

gravity
impetuous
inter
oblivion
ostentations

1. **convocation** (kon vo KAY shun) *n.* an assembly, a group of people gathered in answer to a summons

derivatives: convocational, convoke, convoker

Act IV, scene iii

“Not where he eats, but where he is eaten. A certain **convocation** of politic worms are e’en at him.”

2. **crave** (KRAVE) *v.* to desire intensely, to ask earnestly for

derivatives: craves, craved, craving

Act IV, scene iv

“Tell him that by his license Fortinbras
Craves the conveyance of a promis’d march
Over his kingdom.”

3. **oblivion** (uh BLIV ee un) *n.* state of being completely forgotten or unknown, total forgetfulness

derivatives: oblivious, obliviously

Act IV, scene iv

“Now, whether it be
Bestial **oblivion**, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th’ event,—
A thought which, quarter’d, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward,—I do not know
Why yet I live to say ’This thing’s to do,’
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do’t.”

4. **conjecture** (kun JEK chur) *n.* an inference or conclusion drawn or deduced by surmise or guesswork

derivatives: conjectures, conject, conjector

Act IV, scene v

“Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew
Dangerous **conjectures** in ill-breeding minds.”

5. **inter** (in TER) *v.* to deposit a dead body into a grave

derivatives: inters, interred, interring, interment

Act IV, scene v

“First, her father slain;
Next, your son gone, and he most violent author
Of his own just remove; the people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers
For good Polonius’ death, and we have done but greenly
In hugger-mugger to **inter** him; poor Ophelia
Divided from herself and her fair judgment,
Without the which we are pictures or mere beasts;
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France;
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
Feeds on his wonder, keep, himself in clouds,
With pestilent speeches of his father’s death,
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar’d,
Will nothing stick our person to arraign
In ear and ear.”

6. **impetuous** (im PECH oo us) *adj.* violent hasty, rash, impulsive

derivations: impetuosity, impetuously, impetuosity

Act IV, scene v

“Save ourself, my lord:
The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more **impetuous** haste
Than Young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O’erbears your offices.”

7. **chaste** (CHASTE) *adj.* morally pure, undefiled or stainless

derivatives: chastely, chasteness, chastity

Act IV, scene v

“That drop of blood that’s calm proclaims me bastard;
Cries cuckold to my father; brands the harlot
Even here between the **chaste** unsmirched brows
Of my true mother.”

8. **ostentatious** (os ten TAY shus) *adj.* showy, pretentious; **ostentation** *n.* the pretentious or conspicuous demonstration, as of wealth or importance, a display to impress others.

derivatives: ostentatiously, ostentatiousness

Act IV, scene v (n.)

“His means of death, his obscure funeral—
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o’er his bones,
No noble rite nor formal **ostentation**,—
Cry to be heard, as ‘twere from heaven to earth,
That I must call’t in question.”

9. **gravity** (GRAV eh tee) *n.* serious or dignified behavior; a manner that is serious or solemn

derivatives: graveness, grave, gravely

Act IV, scene vii

“A very riband in the cap of youth—
Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
The light and careless livery that it wears
Than settled age his sables and his weeds,
Importing health and **graveness**.”

10. **abate** (uh BAYT) *v.* to reduce in intensity or amount

derivative: abates, abated, abating

Act IV, scene vii

“There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick or snuff that will **abate** it;
And nothing is at a like goodness still;
For goodness, growing to a plurisy,
Dies in his own too-much.”

Act V

circumvent
dearth
discretion
dross
felicitous

forbearance
gambol
germane
palpable
upshot

1. **circumvent** (SIR kum vent) *v.* to get around something, to outwit, to frustrate, to avoid

derivatives: circumvention, circumvents, circumvented

Act V, scene i

“This might be the pate of a Politician, which this ass now o’erreaches;
one that would **circumvent** God, might it not?”

2. **gambol** (GAM bul) *v.* to playfully skip or leap as in a dance; *n.* a skip or leap

derivatives: gambols, gamboled, gamboling

Act V, scene i (n.)

“Where be your gibes now? your **gambols**? your songs? your flashes of
merriment that were wont to set the table on a roar?”

3. **forbearance** (fore BARE uns) *n.* patience, lenience; **forbear** *v.* to be patient and lenient, to refrain from or desist

derivatives: forbearances, forbearing, forbearingly

Act V, scene i (v.)

“For love of God, **forbear** him!”

4. **discretion** (deh SKRES un) *n.* the ability to act on one’s own power or individual decision, or the ability to act responsibly or with prudence

derivatives: indiscretion (not having discretion), discretionary

Act V, scene ii

“Rashly—
And prais’d be rashness for it; let us know,
Our **indiscretion** sometime serves us well
When our deep plots do pall; and that should learn us
There’s a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will—”

5. **dearth** (DEARTH) *n.* a lack, a scarcity, insufficiency, something held dear
derivative: dearths

Act V, scene ii

“But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article, and his infusion of such **dearth** and rareness as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.”

6. **germane** (jer MANE) *adj.* important to the issue at hand, pertinent
derivatives: germanely, germaneness

Act V, scene ii

“The phrase would be more **germane** to the matter if we could carry cannon by our sides. I would it might be hangers till then.”

7. **dross** (DROSE) *n.* waste material, impure, worthless, commonplace; **drossy** *adj.* something that is impure, worthless, commonplace
derivatives: drossier, drossiest

Act V, scene ii

“Thus has he, and many more of the same bevy that I know the **drossy** age dotes on, only got the tune of the time and outward habit of encounter—a kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fann’d and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trial—the bubbles are out...”

8. **palpable** (PAL puh bul) *adj.* tangible, perceptible, easily noticeable
derivatives: palpability, palpably

Act V, scene ii

“A hit, a very **palpable** hit.”

9. **felicitous** (feh LIS eh tus) *adj.* happy or delightful; **felicity** *n.* the state of being happy or blissful
derivatives: felicitate, felicitousness

Act V, scene ii

“If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from **felicity** awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story.”

10. **upshot** (UP shot) *n.* outcome, final result, conclusion, ending

derivative: upshots

Act V, scene ii

“So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts;
Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters;
Of deaths put on by cunning and forc’d cause;
And, in this **upshot**, purposes mistook
Fall’n on th’ inventors’ heads.”

Fill-in-the-Blank Activity

Hamlet

Using the SAT words below, fill in the blanks with suitable vocabulary choices. Each word or its derivative is used once. The answers may or may not be used in the same plot context as in the quotations given with the definitions.

Act I

adulterate
auspicious
brazen
enmity
obsequious

obstinate
peevish
ponderous
precept
shrill

1. Horatio comments to Marcellus and Bernardo that the ghost they have seen on their watch vanishes after the _____ crowing of the rooster that signals daybreak.
2. The _____, ostentatious speech Claudius delivers concerning the death of his brother King Hamlet and his marriage to his sister-in-law Gertrude enrages Hamlet.
3. Gertrude and Claudius are fooled by Hamlet's _____ compliance in agreeing to their request that he stay at Elsinore and not return to school in Wittenberg.
4. Hamlet's subsequent annoyance and _____ behavior can be attributed to his barely-concealed rage over his mother's marriage to his uncle.
5. Polonius forbids Ophelia to see Hamlet again because of Hamlet's apparent lack of _____ and morals.
6. The king's two _____ courtiers, Cornelius and Voltmand, agree to take his letter to the King of Norway to try to make peace between Denmark and the King of Norway's nephew, Fortinbras.
7. Horatio begs Hamlet not to follow the Ghost and cautions, "He may draw you into madness," but Hamlet _____ refuses to yield to reason.
8. The Ghost calls Claudius an "_____ beast" that gives wicked and "traitorous gifts."
9. The Ghost of Hamlet's father walks late at night with slow, _____ steps, calling for Hamlet to "revenge his foul and most unnatural murder."
10. Hamlet's total _____ toward Claudius is sealed as he swears never to speak of what he has seen on the sword of his father's Ghost.

Fill-in-the-Blank Activity

Hamlet

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Act II

epitaph
gratis
lecher
ominous
paragon

potent
promontory
quaint
vouchsafe
wanton

1. Hamlet believes that a man is the model of perfection, the _____, comparing man to an angel or a god.
2. Hamlet's _____ appearance and behavior startles and confuses Ophelia, who reports these strange matters to her father, Polonius.
3. In _____ disregard for manners and decorum, Hamlet speaks rude nonsense to Polonius, regarding him as a "great baby."
4. In a conceit, Hamlet reflects that in his melancholy he sees his own universe altered—the whole earth reduced to a single _____ and the canopy of the air and sky reduced to poisonous gasses.
5. Polonius tends to offer opinions and advice _____—unsought, tedious, and tiresome.
6. Claudius and Gertrude see Hamlet's erratic actions and rude behavior as _____ signs that he is losing his mind.
7. Hamlet tells Polonius to take good care of the players, preferring a bad _____ after he is dead to their current bad opinion because the players are the "chronicles of the time."
8. In a turbulent soliloquy Hamlet rages against himself for being a coward and against Claudius for being a _____ and a villain.
9. Hamlet believes in the power and _____ of the play to reveal his father's murderer and to "catch the conscience of the king."
10. Claudius learns from Voltmand and Cornelius that the King of Norway will halt the attack if Denmark will _____ passage of the Norwegian army through Denmark.

Fill-in-the-Blank Activity

Hamlet

Using the SAT words below, fill in the blanks with suitable vocabulary choices. Each word or its derivative is used once. The answers may or may not be used in the same plot context as in the quotations given with the definitions.

Act III

afoot
bulwark
clemency
conceit
extant

gilded
insolence
jaded
paradoxical
pithy

1. In answer to the King and Queen's questions about the cause of Hamlet's madness, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern give only short, _____ responses.
2. Hamlet's _____, brutal attack on his mother summons his father's Ghost, who acts in her defense.
3. The Ghost chides Hamlet for disturbing Gertrude and warns that women are often given to wild imaginings and _____ when they are under pressure.
4. _____, Hamlet believes somehow that Polonius is responsible for his own hapless murder.
5. Hamlet is so _____ at this point that he feels no remorse for killing Polonius.
6. It is not that Hamlet shows mercy by his _____ toward Claudius when he decides not to kill Claudius while he is praying; rather, Hamlet refrains because he doesn't want Claudius to die in a state of repentance.
7. During the presentation of the play *The Murder of Gonzago*, Hamlet explains the plot to the court, pointing out that the story is an old one but is still _____.
8. Claudius believes now that he is king, he can _____ over his crimes by the power and authority of his office.
9. Hamlet effectively tears down the _____ of Claudius's defenses when the King is visibly alarmed and distressed, leaving the play before the end.
10. After the play, Claudius realizes what Hamlet's scheme is _____ and that Hamlet knows he put poison in his brother's ear and murdered him.

Fill-in-the-Blank Activity
Hamlet

Using the SAT words below, fill in the blanks with suitable vocabulary choices. Each word or its derivative is used once. The answers may or may not be used in the same plot context as in the quotations given with the definitions.

Act IV

abate
chaste
conjecture
convocation
crave

gravity
impetuous
inter
oblivion
ostentations

1. The King desperately wants to find where Hamlet has hidden the body of Polonius, so he can avoid the wrath of public opinion with a quick funeral and hasty _____.
2. When Rosencrantz and Guildenstern question Hamlet about the body, Hamlet says mysteriously, but truthfully enough, that “the body is with the king, but the king is not with the body,” but his two friends _____ that he is speaking nonsense because he has lost his mind.
3. After finding the body, Claudius calls a _____ of his council, his “wisest friends,” to inform them of the murder of Polonius and what is to be done with Hamlet.
4. The King says he is sending Hamlet to England for his own safety, but secretly, Claudius sends a letter _____ the death of Hamlet when he steps on English soil.
5. The gentle questions of Gertrude and Claudius do not _____ Ophelia’s mindless distraction as she sings simple songs of the death of a young lover and St. Valentine’s Day.
6. Claudius realizes the _____ and danger of his situation when the rabble shouts for Laertes to be king and Laertes bursts angrily through the door seeking revenge for his father’s death.
7. Laertes tries to speak to his sister, but Ophelia is now insane and completely _____ to his presence.
8. In _____ posturing for the benefit of Laertes, Claudius explains that he can not avenge Polonius’ death and kill Hamlet himself because of Gertrude’s great love for her son and because of the devotion of the people for Hamlet.

9. The description of the death of the innocent, _____ Ophelia is described almost lyrically by the Queen.

10. When he hears of the death of his sister, Laertes storms _____ out of the room with Claudius following closely, hoping to prevent any rash action on his part.

Fill-in-the-Blank Activity

Hamlet

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Act V

circumvent
dearth
discretion
dross
felicitous

forbearance
gambol
germane
palpable
upshot

1. When Horatio and Hamlet happen upon the grave diggers, they are speaking foolishly and are showing a _____ of good sense.
2. One of the grave diggers believes that even though Ophelia committed suicide, the church _____ their own rule, giving her Christian burial because Ophelia is one of the “great folk.”
3. Hamlet reflects that in one grave may lie a lawyer who once had plenty of business to take care of, but now his remains have turned to _____.
4. Hamlet discovers the skull of his father’s jester, “poor Yorick,” and in an apostrophe asks where are his tricks and _____ now that delighted them so much in the past.
5. Hamlet’s _____ humor upon his return to England is quickly dispelled when he realizes that the burial preparations are for Ophelia’s interment.
6. Anything Hamlet says to the enraged Laertes in his own defense or to beg for his _____ goes unheeded because Laertes is determined to kill Hamlet and avenge his father’s murder and sister’s suicide.
7. In a show of self-restraint and political _____, Hamlet apologizes to Claudius for the wrong he has done and explains that it was madness.
8. When Hamlet claims the first hit in the fencing match and Laertes denies it, the courtier Osric declares that it was “a hit, a very _____ hit.”
9. The _____ factor in the outcome of the match is that Laertes’s sword is tipped with poison, making any hit to Hamlet fatal.

10. Hamlet and Laertes inadvertently switch swords; the tragic _____ of the match is that both men die in what was supposed to be a friendly contest of skill.

Complete List of SAT Words

Hamlet

1. abate	IV v	26. heralded	III iv
2. adulterate	I v	27. impetuous	IV v
3. afoot	III ii	28. insolence	III i
4. auspicious	I ii	29. inter	IV v
5. brazen	I i	30. jaded	III ii
6. bulwark	III iv	31. lecher	II ii
7. chaste	IV v	32. oblivion	IV v
8. circumvent	V i	33. obsequious	I ii
9. clemency	III ii	34. obstinate	I ii
10. conjecture	IV iii	35. ominous	II ii
11. convocation	IV vii	36. ostentation	IV iv
12. crave	IV v	37. palpable	V ii
13. dearth	V ii	38. paradoxical	III i
14. discretion	V ii	39. paragon	II ii
15. dross	V ii	40. peevish	I ii
16. enmity	I v	41. pithy	III i
17. epitaph	II ii	42. ponderous	I iv
18. extant	III ii	43. potent	II ii
19. felicitous	V ii	44. precept	I iii
20. forbearance	V i	45. promontory	II ii
21. gambol	V i	46. quaint	II i
22. germane	V ii	47. shrill	I i
23. gratis	II ii	48. upshot	V ii
24. gravity	IV v	49. vouchsafe	II ii
25. gilded	III iii	50. wanton	II i

Multiple Choice Exam
Hamlet

The answers may be the SAT words from your list or any of the derivatives.

1. still in existence
 - a. afoot
 - b. extant
 - c. felicitous
 - d. heralded
 - e. ponderous
2. a model of excellence or perfection
 - a. chaste
 - b. clemency
 - c. paragon
 - d. pithy
 - e. vouchsafe
3. waste material
 - a. dross
 - b. gambol
 - c. inter
 - d. ostentatious
 - e. wanton
4. completely unknown, total forgetfulness
 - a. conjecture
 - b. discretion
 - c. oblivion
 - d. peevish
 - e. shrill
5. shameless, insolent, disrespectful
 - a. brazen
 - b. dearth
 - c. gratis
 - d. lecher
 - e. paragon
6. an inscription on a tombstone in memory of the deceased
 - a. brazen
 - b. epitaph
 - c. extant
 - d. gravity
 - e. oblivion
7. tangible, perceptible, easily noticeable
 - a. auspicious
 - b. convocation
 - c. heralded
 - d. obsequious
 - e. palpable
8. weary from overuse, dissipated
 - a. abated
 - b. gilded
 - c. interred
 - d. jaded
 - e. quaint
9. showy, pretentious
 - a. adulterated
 - b. brazen
 - c. insolence
 - d. ostentatious
 - e. paradoxical
10. outcome, final result
 - a. germane
 - b. oblivious
 - c. ominous
 - d. potent
 - e. upshot

11. unusual in character or appearance
a. bulwark
b. chaste
c. obstinate
d. quaint
e. shrill
12. a rule guiding conduct or imposing a standard
a. discretion
b. forbearance
c. palpable
d. potent
e. precept
13. important to the issue at hand, pertinent
a. germane
b. obsequious
c. ponderous
d. potent
e. vouchsafe
14. overly attentive, servile
a. auspicious
b. impetuous
c. obsequious
d. ominous
e. ostentatious
15. an assembly, a coming together
a. bulwark
b. convocation
c. dearth
d. dross
e. gambol
16. absolute hatred
a. abate
b. adulterate
c. enmity
d. extant
e. forbearance
17. violent, hasty, rash, impulsive
a. auspicious
b. enmity
c. felicitous
d. heralded
e. impetuous
18. threatening
a. afoot
b. conjecture
c. extant
d. insolence
e. ominous
19. a lack, a scarcity
a. brazen
b. circumvent
c. dearth
d. dross
e. germane
20. concise, meaningful
a. dearth
b. epitaph
c. enmity
d. pithy
e. promontory
21. to desire intensely
a. adulterate
b. crave
c. forbear
d. gild
e. ponder
22. free, without charge
a. discrete
b. extant
c. gratis
d. felicity
e. jaded

23. a strong defense or something that defends
- abate
 - bulwark
 - clemency
 - gambol
 - paragon
24. to get around something, to outwit, to frustrate, to avoid
- circumvent
 - clemency
 - conjecture
 - enmity
 - forbearance
25. covered with gold or a golden color, having a background of wealth
- chaste
 - discrete
 - extant
 - gilded
 - heralded

Writing Activity
Hamlet Act II, scene ii

Act II scene ii of *Hamlet* is important because in it Hamlet sets his course to destroy Claudius—his uncle, his father’s murderer, his mother’s husband. In this scene Hamlet is talking with his suborned friends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, but he quickly becomes lost in his own thoughts as he wonders about man, his existence, and his place in the universe.

Read the following speech carefully, noting the frequent use of figurative language, repetition, and the juxtaposition of opposed ideas.

Write an essay in which you explain the meaning of the speech, the use of figurative language and literary devices, and the speaker’s attitude toward man, his place in the universe, and toward himself. What universal theme is evident in Hamlet’s speculations?

HAMLET:

“I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all my mirth,
forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed, it goes so heavily with
my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a
sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this
brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted with golden
fire—why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent
congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in
reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express
and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like
a god! The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet to
me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me—no, nor
woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.”