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## HANDOUT 1

### THE LOG

While reading the play, you will keep a log (that is, a record) of your journey through it. Log entries will consist of such things as scene summaries; comments on the action, characters, language, themes, and so forth; and your personal reactions to those elements of the play.

Record all log entries in a notebook.

You are in charge of your own personal log. You will decide what to write and in what form, but there are three rules:

1. Clearly label each entry with the act and scene number.
2. Write after every reading assignment.
3. Over the course of the play, respond to a variety of the components so that by the end you will have considered each component several times.

Write in your own voice. Interact with the play. Grades will be based on the thoroughness of your responses.

**Entries:** For each scene, do a minimum of *three* of the following:

1. Summarize the action of the scene.
2. Comment in one sentence on what you think is the significance of this scene. What would the play be like without it?
3. Ask questions about the scene. Has anything in the scene caused you confusion? Ask one of the characters in the scene a question—or ask me a question.

Example:

2.1—Questions: Polonius—what's your problem? Reynaldo—are you going to spread the bad word about Laertes? I hope you don't. Ophelia—how strongly do you feel about Hamlet? you'd better avoid him totally before something terrible happens! Hey, Hamlet—what are your feelings toward Ophelia? Do you care about her? (Kenda White)

4. Quote lines from the scene that you enjoyed and comment on them.

Example:

1.1—Horatio says "Most like. It harrows me with fear and wonder." This line really explains to us what all three of the guards are feeling when they see this ghost. They are all frightened by it, yet they wonder why it came to them and why it is dressed the way it is. It really sets the mood for the whole scene because it lets us know that they are anxious. The first few lines in this scene really shocked me because we didn't know anything about these characters yet they were all so nervous and jumpy. Plus they were very suspicious and cautious of everything. (Daniel Grooms)

5. Describe your reactions to a character, action, or idea you confronted in the scene.

Example:

1.2—King Claudius seems like a flake to me. He seems to know what he's talking about but to me it's like it's rehearsed or something. I can understand him trying to be friends with Hamlet, but it seems to me that he is just doing it to make himself look good. I don't think he means anything of what he said to Hamlet. (Julia Abernathy)

6. Talk about the relationships characters have to one another, quoting specific words or phrases to give evidence for your opinion.

Example:

4.1—I'm not sure if Gertrude is honest to Claudius or Hamlet. I can't decide if she's trying to BS Claudius or if she has betrayed Hamlet. I felt really confused about just who was on whose side. I want Gertrude to just be covering for Hamlet, telling Claudius what he thinks he already knows, not that Hamlet is in complete control. But then again Hamlet told his mother not to go to Claudius and she did, so Gertrude doesn't seem so great to me. (Dani Doty)

7. Pretend you are an actor playing one of the characters in the scene. Get inside that character's mind. Tell how the character feels about herself, about other characters, about the situation of the scene.

Example:

1.2—I feel sorry for Hamlet! He comes home to find out that his mother is married to his uncle and his father is dead. Then to find out that his buds are seeing his father's ghost! He's really getting confused and messed in the head. No wonder he wishes it was legal to commit suicide. This poor kid must have some problems, big time! I think he's getting curious as to why this all is happening at once. I think he's getting a whiff of a dead rat! (J.A.)

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