



Personal Soliloquy Project

Dynamics of a Soliloquy

A **poetic soliloquy** is a speech delivered alone on stage by a character. The speaker may appear to be speaking to himself, or to a specific, usually imaginary audience. In most plays (especially Shakespearean), soliloquies are used to illuminate a character's inner thoughts to the audience.

The purpose of a soliloquy is to reveal the character's thoughts, motives, feelings, and problems to the audience by using one of the following **methods of development**:

- **Expressing an inner conflict** — such as when Hamlet describes himself: “That I, son of a dear father murder'd, / Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell, / Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words.” (Hamlet 2.2)
- **Pursuing the answer to a rhetorical question; arguing both sides of an internal debate** — such as when Hamlet debates on whether he should end his suffering by committing suicide:

*To be, or not to be: that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? (Hamlet 3.1)*

- **Describing how he views himself** — such as when Hamlet describes himself: “Am I a coward? ... I, / a dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak, / Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause, / And can say nothing.” (Hamlet 2.2)
- **Describing how he views the world** — such as when Hamlet says, “How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable/ Seem to me all the uses of this world!” (Hamlet 1.2)

The Conventions of Shakespearean Soliloquies

- **Blank verse** — unrhymed verse, usually in iambic pentameter (10 syllables per line, stress on even syllables)
- **First person point of view** — using I, me, my, myself, methinks, etc.
- **Figurative Speech** — such as metaphors, similes, personifications, analogies, allusions to classical mythology or to the Bible, irony, oxymoron, word reversals, sentence reversals, antitheses (opposites), etc. A figure of speech is language that is out of the ordinary, intended to be ornamental, and to appeal to the audience through its novelty. Please use the dictionary if you don't know the definition of these devices.
- **Imagery** — the creation of word pictures. Imagery provides a vivid, specific description. Compare, for example, “What you are saying is unpleasant for me to hear,” with “These words are razors to my wounded heart” (Titus Adronicus 1.1.307).

Personal Soliloquy Project Overview

Your task is to write a soliloquy of your own. The goal of this assignment will be to retain Shakespeare's rhythm and structure while creating your own original, thoughtful, creative, and engaging soliloquy. You can choose one of the following two options:

OPTION A:

Assume the identity of a character from *Hamlet* **other than Hamlet**. Your character should be conflicted about something that is going on at a specific point in the play (select a specific event for the character to react to). Write a soliloquy that illuminates the character's thoughts, feelings, plans, and motives regarding this scene.

OPTION B:

Write a personal soliloquy in which you express an inner conflict, pursue the answer to a rhetorical question, argue both sides of an internal debate, and/or describe how you view yourself and the world. Feel free to use the soliloquies from *Hamlet* as a model.



In addition to your soliloquy, you will need to write a reflection (250-300 words) include the following:

- **Brief Context of the Soliloquy:** explain where it appears in the play, what has just happened before it is said and what the character is feeling when he says it (*OPTION A ONLY*)
- **Summary of Meaning and Theme:** explain what the character is saying in the soliloquy, what method(s) of development you chose to focus on, and explain the theme(s) your soliloquy addressed
- **Mood and Language:** discuss the atmosphere of the soliloquy and explain how the use of figurative language, imagery, etc. adds to the atmosphere
- **Character:** explain what the soliloquy reveals about you
- **Soliloquy Conventions:** Identify your three examples of antithesis, your three high-quality examples of alliteration or assonance, and your extended metaphor. Additionally, explain the meaning you were attempting to portray and/or the effect you were attempting to achieve for each.

Due date: Your personal/character soliloquy must typed into a Word document using a font appropriate to the tone of your piece. Your completed soliloquy combined with your reflection (Times New Roman or Arial Font) should be saved as "LastNameFirstInitials-Soliloquy-DueDate" (example: WilliamsCK-Soliloquy-5-24-2015) and both emailed to williams.ck@easthartford.org and uploaded to Turnitin.com by **Sunday, May 24, 2015**.

Point Total: **100 points**



Your project will be graded on the following:

- **Soliloquy Content (40 points):** You have 25-35 lines in which you express an inner conflict, pursue the answer to a rhetorical question, argue both sides of an internal debate, and/or describe how you view yourself and the world. (Character soliloquies will also be graded on the ability to stay true to the character's voice.)
- **Soliloquy Conventions (20 points):** Your soliloquy is written in blank verse, in first person point of view, and included an abundance of figurative speech and imagery.
- **Reflection (20 points):** Your reflection is insightful, thoughtful, and answers all of the above listed questions (minimum of 250 words).
- **Creativity/Language (15 points):** You use words in a creative, interesting way. You also demonstrate an attempt in using Shakespearean language to the best of your ability. (No, I don't expect you to master Shakespearean dialect overnight, but you should, however, make some effort, such as: avoiding contemporary slang, using blank verse, and attempting to pick up on *some* of the Shakespearean words you've seen thus far. For example, you can use words such as *fie*, *ne'er*, *anon* (soon), *ere* (before), *prithee* (I pray thee), *wherefore* (for what reason/as a result of which), *thee*, *thou*, *doth*, etc.
- **Grammar (5 points):** Your work is proofread and spelling and grammar are accurate.

Enjoy yourselves with this assignment. If you allow yourself, you can have quite a bit of fun with this project!