

Prompt 1—Shakespeare Essay

Argumentative Essay

Essay Checklist:

1. Did I write an introduction with a hook, a claim, and three reasons?
2. Do I have 2-3 body paragraphs explaining each reason for my claim?
3. Do I have a conclusion that summarizes my main points and emphasizes my main lesson?
4. Does each paragraph have 3-7 sentences?
5. Did I include textual support with citations from sources?
6. Did I proofread for errors in grammar and spelling?
7. Did I list or cite my sources in correct MLA format?
8. Did you use a mainly academic tone, with one or two conversational phrases for effect?

Shakespeare Still Matters

It is rare that one meets a person who knows nothing about the fictitious star-crossed lovers, Romeo and Juliet. Shakespeare's world renowned plays such as *Romeo and Juliet* are admired because of the author's ingenuity and way with words. One writer estimates that Shakespeare's plays alone are responsible for an additional 1500 words to the English vocabulary (Curran). Much of these are words we still use today. It is the fact that we still use Shakespearean words that makes it clear that he still matters. In addition to the many words originating from Shakespeare's authorship, his influence is still apparent in contemporary performances, and his works reflect socially relevant issues pertaining to leadership and the general human condition.

Because his works were written over 400 years ago, many students have a hard time finding the literature relevant. However, the importance of Shakespearean works such as *Henry VI*, *King Lear*, *Coriolanus*, and *As You Like It*, which were all penned during the 1600's, are still relevant simply based on the fact that words such as *Bandit*, *Lackluster*, *Lonely* and *Elbow* (used as a verb) came from those plays (Fogarty). These are common words still incorporated into everyday speech today. The fact that contemporary society still uses these words gives emphasis to the relevance of Shakespeare's work and clearly shows how much he still matters.

Shakespeare's influence on contemporary performances goes without saying. A large majority of modern-day television shows and movies have ideas originating from Shakespearean literature. Popular films such as *The Simpsons*, *Doctor Who*, and *Shakespeare in Love*, showcase Shakespeare's relevance (McInnis and Higgins). It is crucial for students to understand where much of this creativity and ingenuity derives; in order to fully comprehend who one is, one must

learn about his or her roots. Shakespearean influence is at the root of many of the creative works we enjoy today.

One of the main reasons people enjoy shows like *The Simpsons*, *Doctor Who*, and *Shakespeare in Love*, is because they can relate so well to human expressions and general issues depicted in them. One issue that Shakespeare obviously felt strongly about was the issue of corrupt leadership. In works such as *Hamlet*, *Coriolanus*, *Richard III*, and *Macbeth*, Shakespeare depicts modern day models of what leadership should or should not be (Wilk). There are many relevant ideas pertaining to the human condition depicted in his works, which allow Shakespeare to remain a permanent model for contemporary literature and the performing arts.

Shakespeare has clearly made an indelible impression on the world at large. If Shakespeare were still alive today, he would be paid royalties from derivatives of his work. His influence cannot be relegated to the past only; but to the present, and to the future. His words are actively used in contemporary society, his creativity is seen in current films, and present-day leaders can learn a lot about good versus bad leadership by reading his plays such as *Macbeth* or *Hamlet*. Without a shadow of a doubt, Shakespeare still matters.

Works Cited

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