

The Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark

Act I: Making Inferences

Watching or reading a play requires spectators or readers to draw inferences about characters based not only on what they say and do but also on what other characters say about them. What is your impression of the characters introduced by Shakespeare in Act I?

Review the following characters, and record your inferences about each one. The first one has been done for you.

Character	What the Character Says and Does; What Others Say About the Character	What Can I Infer About the Character?
Hamlet	<i>Hamlet shows through his speech that he is quick-witted; adept at puns, double meanings, and irony. He reveals his despair through his soliloquies. Others describe his dark clothing and depressed mood.</i>	<i>Hamlet is sensitive, bright, passionate, and loyal to his father.</i>
Claudius		
Gertrude		
Polonius		
Laertes		
Ophelia		

FOLLOW-UP: Based on what you have inferred about these characters, how well do you think Denmark is being governed? Support your opinion with evidence from your chart or other evidence from the text.