Information

University of Oslo
Department of Literature, Area Studies and European Languages
Autumn 2025
ENG2327 - Shakespeare

The exam has four topics to choose from, and you will write an essay on one of them.

All questions must be answered in English.

What you write will be stored automatically every 15 seconds.

After starting the exam, you will see your remaining time in the upper left corner.

No examination support material is allowed.

Break a leg!

1 ENG2327 Shakespeare

Choose **ONE** of the following topics:

1. 'Who chooses me must give and hazard all he hath.' To what extent can this be said to identify the moral of *The Merchant of Venice*?

2. Write an essay on Edmund's soliloquy at the beginning of 1.2 **(text provided)**. How does it present some of the problems that will be further developed in the play?

3. Write an essay on Othello's final speech **(text provided)**. How does it either resolve or complicate some of the key problems in the play?

4. Write an essay on the dialogue between Claudius and Laertes at 4.7.105—137, paying attention to the ways in which Shakespeare reconfigures themes and images he has already developed earlier in the play **(text provided)**.

Fill in your answer here

Format

Words: 0

Maximum marks: 0

Question 1
Attached



Exam texts ENG2327 Shakespeare, autumn 2025

***King Lear* 1.21—22:**

EDMUND
Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? Wherefore base,
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous and my shape as true
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base, with baseness, bastardy? Base, base?
Who in the lusty stealth of nature, take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth within a dull, stale, tired bed
Go to the creating of a whole tribe of fops
Got 'tween a sleep and wake. Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate. Fine word, "legitimate"!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top th' legitimate. I grow, I prosper.
Now gods, stand up for bastards!

***Othello* 5.2.336—57:**

OTHELLO Soft you, a word or two before you go.
I have done the state some service, and they know 't:
No more of that. I pray you, in your letters,
When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
Speak of me as I am. Nothing extenuate,
Nor set down aught in malice. Then must you speak
Of one that loved not wisely, but too well;
Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,
Like the base Indian*, threw a pearl away [*alternative reading: 'Judean']
Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
Albeit unused to the melting mood,
Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees
Their medicinable gum. Set you down this.
And say besides, that in Aleppo once,
Where a malignant and a turbanned Turk
Beat a Venetian and traduced the state,
I took by th' throat the circumcisèd dog,
And smote him, thus. (He stabs himself.)
LODOVICO O bloody period!
GRATIANO All that is spoke is marred.
OTHELLO (to Desdemona) I kissed thee ere I killed thee. No way but this,
Killing myself, to die upon a kiss. (Kisses Desdemona, and dies.)

***Hamlet* 4.7.105—37:**
KING Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?
LAERTES Why ask you this?
KING Not that I think you did not love your father,
But that I know love is begun by time
And that I see in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it.
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 pleurisy,
Dies in his own too much. That we would do
We should do when we would; for this "would" changes
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents,
And then this "should" is like a spendthrift sigh,
That hurts by easing. But to the quick of th' ulcer:
Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake
To show yourself indeed your father's son
More than in words?
LAERTES To cut his throat i' th' church.
KING No place indeed should murder sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this? Keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet, returned, shall know you are come home.
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you, in fine, together
And wager on your heads. He, being remiss,
Most generous, and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils, so that with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.