

# [Shakespeare, william: comparing and contrasting ha](https://assignbuster.com/shakespeare-william-comparing-and-contrasting-ha/)

mlet and MacBethChristine Tirman
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Professor King
Essay # 3
Comparing and Contrasting
Hamlet and MacBeth
Throughout William Shakespeares plays Hamlet and Macbeth
there are many similarities, along with many differences. These plays
are both Shakespearean tragedies, which often use supernatural
incidents to intrigue the readers interest, and consists of a hero that
has a tragic flaw. There are many comparative and contrasting
aspects in these plays.

The opening of Hamlet involves a supernatural, as does the
opening of Macbeth. In the first scene the ghost of his father, King
Hamlet, approaches Hamlet. Similarly, the opening of Macbeth
involves the three witches. Although the witches can be seen by
anyone they approach, the ghost of King Hamlet is only seen by
Hamlet himself, and in one scene by Marcellus and Bernardo,
Hamlets servants. Similarly in both plays, the main characters are
slightly suspicious of the actual powers these supernatural figures
have. As the witches use their apparent powers to tell Macbeth the
future, the ghost of King Hamlet tells Hamlet what has happened
already. Hamlet states in one of his soliloquies The spirit that I have
seen / may be the devil (2. 2. 598-599). Macbeth also has his doubts
because when the witches tell him that he will be named Thane of
Cawder, Macbeth himself had not known, but many people had. It is
possible the witches could have known. In the same matter in both
plays, the presentation of the supernatural began to lead to the final
downfall of each of the characters. In Macbeth, the three witches
cause him to think and do evil deeds. In Hamlet, if he had not seen
the ghost of his father, he would not have known that Claudius has
killed his father to claim the throne. In both instances the characters
gave into the nagging supernatural beliefs. And hence they lost their
lives.
Other characters in these plays show parallels in their plots.
Both plays have a main character that portrays the king of that
country. In Hamlet, the King of Denmark, Claudius is directly related
to Hamlet. He is his uncle, and also his mothers new husband.
However, in Macbeth the King of Scotland, King Duncan, is not
directly related to the main character. Both plays do however, have
the main character killing off the king in order to get the throne, which
ultimately results in there own death. Horatio, in Hamlet and Banquo,
in Macbeth share the same loyalty to the main characters. In both
stories these friends are more skeptical of the supernaturals than the
main characters themselves. In a meeting with the witches, Banquo
challenges them to Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear /
Your favours nor your hate (1. 3. 60-61). In a scene where Horatio
and Hamlet witness the ghost, Horatio tries to keep Hamlet from
going with the ghost. He was even reluctant in the opening scene to
go with Marcellus to hear about the ghost.
Some themes in the plays are also similar. The way that the
weeds and flowers illustrate good and bad in Hamlet is like the way
the birds do in Macbeth. This is also true of the fair and foul theme in
Macbeth and the indirections theme in Hamlet. In Macbeth, to the
weird sisters, what is ugly is beautiful, and what is beautiful is ugly.
Through the play fair appearances hide foul realities. This theme has
a lot in common with the theme in Hamlet where the appearance
varies from the reality. In contrast, one of the main themes in
Macbeth is Manhood, while in Hamlet it is frailty, and more
specifically, the frailty of women.
It seems evident that Shakespeare used a strong, similar story
line in these two tragedies. Apparently Macbeth and Hamlet are
similar stories in numerous ways. These two plays seem different
because of the variation in story lines, but in fact are very similar due
to the parallel characters and themes.