

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

mlet and MacBethChristine Tirman   
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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.