**EXAM STYLE QUESTION: Discuss the following passage from Act 3, scene 1, exploring Shakespeare’s use of language and dramatic effect.**

To be, or not to be – that is the question;

Whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer

The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune

Or to take arms against a sea of troubles

And by opposing end them; to die: to sleep –

No more, and by a sleep to say we end

The heartache and the thousand natural shocks

That flesh is heir to: ‘tis a consummation

Devoutly to be wished – to die: to sleep –

To sleep, perchance to dream – ay, there’s the rub,

For in that sleep of death what dreams may come

When we have shuffled off this mortal coil

Must give us pause: there’s the respect

That makes calamity of so long life.

For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,

Th’oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,

The pangs of despised love, the law’s delay,

The insolence of office and the spurns

That patient merit of th’unworthy takes,

When he himself might his quietus make

With a bare bodkin. Who would fardels bear

To grunt and sweat under a weary life

But that dread of something after death

(The undiscovered country from whose bourn

No traveller returns) puzzles the will

And makes us rather bear those ills we have

Than fly to others that we know not of.

Thus conscience does make cowards –

And thus the native hue of resolution

Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought,

And enterprises of great pitch and moment

With this regard their currents turn awry

And lose the name of action.

**APPROACHING EXTRACTS – CLOSE ANALYSIS SKILLS**

**1. Making sense of the whole extract**

* Break into syntactical units: sentences, ideas, groups
* What is the extract about?
* What questions are raised by the speech?
* What big ideas are explored here?
* What is view of life is presented here?
* What is the overall mood and atmosphere?

**2. How do the language, form and structure help express/reflect the ideas explored here?**

Structure

* How is the soliloquy structured?
* What connections are there between the different ideas?
* What does the structure suggest about Hamlet’s state of mind?

Imagery

* Select some metaphors and explore their effect
* Can you find any patterns in terms of the image choices?
* What is the cumulative effect of the imagery as a whole?

Antithesis/opposition

* Select some examples of antithetical words or phrases and explore their effect
* What is the impact of oppositions in terms of the soliloquy as a whole?
* What do you think is the most significant opposition and why?

Repetition/ doubling

* Which words/phrases get repeated and why?
* There are lots of examples of doubles using ‘and’ ( e.g. slings and arrows). Why might this be?
* What is the effect of repetition on the soliloquy as a whole?

Verse form/ metre/ rhythm

* How/where does Shakespeare use rhythm/sound to emphasise key words?
* Where are the moments of disruption to the rhythm?
* What do you notice about Shakespeare’s use of enjambment?

Punctuation

* What might be the purpose of the colons and semi-colons?
* How does Shakespeare use the full stop?
* Can you find any other examples of punctuation being used in interesting ways?