

## THE HAMLET RAP

This narrative poem tells the whole story of Hamlet in 14 verses – plus chorus! It was devised and created by members of Act Too Youth Theatre as a finale to a performance of Hamlet, the Murder Mystery – a one-act adaptation of Shakespeare’s great tragedy. The members wrote this, working in small groups, and performed it as a whole group at a cultural event. One of our parents created a drum backbeat for us (on CD) and we used this as a rhythm during both the creation and performance of the piece.

I was incredibly impressed that members of the youth theatre – some as young as 10 years old – were able to recall the whole story of Hamlet. They added gestures and small mimes to the performance to bring it to life and I was very proud of them. They also had lots of fun creating and performing it!

Please feel free to perform **The Hamlet Rap** in any way that you and your students choose. Enjoy!

## **THE HAMLET RAP**

### **VERSE 1**

Now here's a little story 'bout Hamlet the King  
He was a man who had everything -  
money, power, a son and a wife -  
But someone else wanted them and ended his life.

### **CHORUS**

Yo Hamlet!  
Hamlet the King!  
He was a man who had everything.

### **VERSE 2**

Hamlet was a-sleeping one lazy, sunny day  
When his brother, Claudius, took his life away.  
He poured some poison in his ear  
Didn't care he'd killed his brother, let's make that clear.

### **CHORUS**

Yo Hamlet!  
Hamlet the King!  
He was a man who had everything.

### **VERSE 3**

Claudius the murderer now lived like the King,  
Married Hamlet's widow and had everything -  
Money, power, the throne and his wife -  
And nobody suspected he took Hamlet's life.

### **CHORUS**

Yo Hamlet!  
Hamlet the King!  
He was a man who had everything.

### **VERSE 4**

Hamlet's friends had called a meetin'  
So he went to go and greet 'em.  
Then he saw the ghost of his dad  
Which made him go completely mad!

### **CHORUS**

Yo Hamlet!  
Son of the King!  
He was a man who knew everything.

## PERFORMANCE POETRY

Performance poetry transforms poetry readings into theatrical events. Any form or style of poetry can be turned into a performance using sound, rhythm, variety of tone, pitch and volume and movement. Performance poetry draws the audience in to hear and feel the essence of a poem, or to engage with the story. The Hamlet Rap is designed to be performed by a whole class or group, which makes it suitable for less confident performers too.

*Here's some more information on Performance Poetry that may help you with your performance:*

Source: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/article-perform-a-poem>

### *What is performance poetry?*

Performance poetry is a term that can be used for all poetry that was written with the goal of being performed instead of being published in the written form. There are just about as many types of performance poetry as there are performers. Some poems sound like speeches or rants, with no apparent poetic structure or form. Others might incorporate rhymes and repetition to create a more distinguished reading rhythm. There are no rules – the only boundaries are set by your imagination.

### *Common techniques used in performance poetry*

While there really are no restrictions to how you can compose your performance poem, there are certain techniques that are commonly used to elevate the parts of the poem that the composer feels are the most important. These are:

- Pausing to create tension
- Changing the reciting speed from slow to fast and vice versa
- Acting out the poem by physically expressing chosen parts of it
- Creating an elliptical structure where things that were already said are revisited later in the performance

### *Tips for performing and reciting*

If your students are ready to take the plunge and try performing poetry, just remember these four things:

1. Think about how you want to perform your poem – try different things and make notes of what works and what doesn't
2. Relax and take your time
3. Remember to speak clearly
4. Have fun!

Source: <https://www.familyfriendpoems.com/poem/article-perform-a-poem>

Also visit: <https://www.wikihow.com/Perform-Poetry>

### **Music/Rap Rhythm**

You might be able to find free back beats or a rap rhythm to underscore for your poem's performance online. These examples aren't free but they're great for listening to different rap styles, tempos and rhythms. From these your school orchestra or keyboard/synthesiser wizard should be able to compose the perfect rap beat for your performance.

<https://www.pond5.com/search?kw=rap%20beat&media=music>