**Appearance versus Reality Or Truth versus deceit**

**This idea is introduced in Act One. Queen Gertrude asks Hamlet why he is still so heavily mourning the death of his father, claiming that he seems to be grieving more than is necessary. This is a reference to what things appear to be and what they really are. Most the characters hide true feelings and intentions.**

**The king and Polonius are trying to know what might be hidden beneath Hamlet’s madness. Hamlet is pretending the appearance of madness to obscure his secret mission to reveal the king’s true murderous nature and to kill his deceitful uncle. Polonius sends his servant, Reynaldo, to spy on his son Laertes in France. The king sends Hamlet's two friends to spy on the prince.**

**The play within the play**

**It is also an exploration of this theme. The very nature of acting is the putting on of an appearance and this is wonderfully illustrated when Hamlet asks the actors to make the play as realistic as possible. The actors are trying to make a fictional play that actually reflects the reality of the previous king’s murder as realistic as possible.**

**the play within the play serves as a symbol for the actual murder of the old King Hamlet by King Claudius. As the ‘play within the play’ is a physical representation of the original murder.**