**Symbols**

1. **Yorick's skull:**

**The appearance of Yorick’s skull in the final act of the play symbolizes death and its inevitability. Hamlet knew Yorick, the court comic, as a child and his fond memories of the man lead him to consider the idea that death serves as an equalizer among people, whether rich or poor, good or bad, lower or higher. He wonders out loud where the remains of Alexander the Great ended up, concluding that we all share the same fate in the end and return as dust to the earth. He knows that death surrounding the prince: his plans to kill the king, the king and Laertes’ plans to kill him, and the funeral about to take place for Ophelia.**

**This symbol of death appears at a critical moment in the play: shortly before its catastrophic ending when most of the major characters will meet their deaths. The idea of death repeats throughout the play: Hamlet explores the idea in his famous speech ‘To be, or not to be’ (Act 3, Scene 1); the presence of a ghost; the murder of the previous king; the enacting of murder in the play within the play (The Murder of Gonzago), the repeated use of poison. The use of a skull is a way of physically representing the repeated idea of death.**