Hamlet: Scene-by-Scene Timeline

# Act I

- Scene 1 – Guards and Horatio see the ghost of King Hamlet.

- Scene 2 – Claudius becomes king and marries Gertrude. Hamlet is upset.

- Scene 3 – Laertes and Polonius warn Ophelia about Hamlet.

- Scene 4 – Hamlet sees the ghost and follows it.

- Scene 5 – The ghost tells Hamlet that Claudius murdered him and demands revenge.

# Act II

- Scene 1 – Polonius spies on Laertes. Ophelia reports Hamlet’s strange behavior.

- Scene 2 – Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are sent to spy. Hamlet asks actors to perform a play of his father’s murder.

# Act III

- Scene 1 – Hamlet delivers 'To be or not to be.' He rejects Ophelia. Claudius grows suspicious.

- Scene 2 – Hamlet stages the play. Claudius reacts with guilt.

- Scene 3 – Claudius tries to pray. Hamlet almost kills him but waits.

- Scene 4 – Hamlet confronts Gertrude and kills Polonius by accident. The ghost reminds him of his mission.

# Act IV

- Scene 1–2 – Claudius learns of Polonius’s death. Plans to send Hamlet to England.

- Scene 3 – Claudius sends Hamlet away with secret orders for his death.

- Scene 4 – Hamlet reflects on his delay when he sees soldiers fight for little cause.

- Scene 5 – Ophelia goes mad. Laertes returns, furious over his father’s death.

- Scene 6 – Hamlet escapes Claudius’s death plot at sea.

- Scene 7 – Claudius and Laertes plan to kill Hamlet in a duel. News arrives that Ophelia has drowned.

# Act V

- Scene 1 – Hamlet talks about death with a gravedigger. He fights Laertes at Ophelia’s funeral.

- Scene 2 – Hamlet duels Laertes. Poisoned sword and drink kill Gertrude, Laertes, Claudius, and Hamlet. Horatio survives to tell the story.