

Module A Study Guide

3 Main Questions

1. **Rubric questions – Resonances/Dissonances, mirror/collide, reframe/reimagine, issues/values/assumptions/perspectives, intertextuality (enhance understanding)**
2. **Context – 400 years apart, yet ideas transcend temporal parameters**
3. **Thematic – Revenge, Forgiveness, Imprisonment/freedom, metatheatre/performance, good/bad, illusion/deception**

If a broad question → 3 paragraphs on forgiveness/imprisonment/metatheatre

If a specific question → 2 paragraphs on two main ideas

Key Questions

- How do resonances and dissonances create intertextual meaning?
- To what extent does Atwood reimagine the details in *The Tempest*?
- How are disparate issues in conversation with both Atwood and the audience?
- How does context influence the representation of settings/characters/themes in *The Tempest*/*Hag-Seed*?

Themes

Metatheatre

Theatre is presented in both texts as a powerful tool in encouraging self-reflection to explore ideas of human morality allowing the audience to gain clarity on the relationship between theatre and reality.

The Tempest:

- The Tempest is highly self-reflective and can be viewed as a personal allegory to Shakespeare's life as a playwright.
 - The infusion of metatheatricality of Prospero's characterisation projects Shakespeare into the role in his "Our revels now have ended" soliloquy.
 - Reminds the audience of the illusory nature of theatre, consequently revealing the play's deep metatheatricality.
 - Connotation of "actors" and "pageant" to theatre with metaphors "melted into air" and "baseless fabric" evoke an atmosphere of emptiness which allude to the ephemerality of theatre.
- "the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself" – double entendre of "**Great globe**" as it alludes to the "**Globe theatre**" but also demonstrates theatrum mundi.
 - **Theatrum mundi** is a concept whereby life is effectively a play in itself.

Hag-Seed:

- Hag-Seed aligns itself with this idea in "after all it's a show and all shows must go on," pointing out the resonance between theatrum mundi and the literary trope of "**show**" as a metaphor for life.
 - "The life of imagination" description of theatre creates a paradox of real life consisting of imagination and performance to modernise the concept.
- Felix's interior monologue mimics Shakespeare's statements in "all theatre is ephemeral" and "theatre is the art of true illusions"

effectively using oxymoron to create a paradox in which theatre changes the audience's perspectives on life.

- Atwood reinforces the relevance of theatre onto a contemporary audience to create deeper understanding of theatre as a true and unmodified reflection of human existence.

Imprisonment/Freedom

The Tempest:

- Shakespeare characterises Caliban as a lowly slave where Prospero refers to him as a “credulous monster” and “a thing of darkness” thereby repetitively using derogatory language in his treatment.
 - Reflective of the age of exploration where European colonialists had called natives “*monsters*” and imprisoned them thereby questioning human morality in light of that behaviour.
 - “Make our fire, fetch our wood and serve in offices that profit us” – instructive verb “*fetch*” gives the audience a strong impression of how Caliban is dehumanised and forced into servitude to profit Prospero, reflective of the tendency of Europeans to exploit native inhabitants.
- Caliban then retaliates to the darkness of Prospero's oppressive rule – “Batter his skull or cut his wezand with thy knife” → Brutish imagery evocatively depicts his savage retaliation to disempowerment, *contrasting* with his poetic reflections of the island “the isle is full of noises, sweet sounds” to shed light on how Caliban was initially good but marred by the darkness of corrupt power.

- Shakespeare also portrays imprisonment through the Prospero and the metaphoric translation of prisons where his desire for vengeance limits his capability for compassion and thus is confined by his anger and frustration.
 - He is only “set free” when he is able to learn empathy, reflected when Prospero was “Stuck in his book doin magic.” Dramatic irony is evident when Prospero’s books are symbolic of his power and knowledge but in actual fact are trapping him further away from his own humanity.
- “Let your indulgence set me free” → Prospero’s soliloquy where he is freed from hatred after Ariel’s moral guidance. Shakespeare speaks to the audience through Prospero setting himself “free” as a playwright.

Hag-Seed:

- Atwood explores imprisonment through echoing the motif of prisons, reimagining the setting of the novel in a real prison.
 - This emphasises the need for understanding through her use of prison literacy programs → transformational and reformatory nature of education.
 - Intertextuality in “my island domain. My place of exile. My penance. My theatre” allows Felix to give prisoners a temporary escape in the form of education and theatre, emphasising Atwood’s concern for reformation.
- Transcends the idea of spiritual confinement through Felix’s imprisonment through grief.
 - He is only able to set himself free when he sets Miranda free → “To the elements be free” He says to her and finally she is” →

intertextual reference enables Atwood another parallel for the text's other Ariel, the ghostly spirit of Miranda, the product of Felix's spiritual confinement and state of despair.

- “Snap out of it, Felix. Pull yourself together. Break out of your cell. You need a real-world connection” Immediately establishes imprisonment as a key aspect of his character arc. Imprisonment as a mental state is conveyed through language tropes thereby describing the exiting of a hypnotic state of mental disarray.
 - Metaphor of the cell connotes to a prison and “real-world connection” suggests Felix's imprisonment is metaphysical, effectively positioning mental prisons as a key social concern.
- Atwood reimagines the point of view of the prisoners as an embodiment of Caliban, successfully conveying how dominant social assumptions are used to deride and undermine people. The prisoners confront the ministers in a subversive rap performance “Monster, monster! White collar crook! We KNOW what you took!” challenging the way they are seen as criminals with no hope of reform. In this way, Atwood ironically exposes the corruption of modern politics as the quasi leaders of our society diminish the metaphoric light or “goodness” of others.

Revenge/Forgiveness

The Tempest:

- The Tempest is reflective of Jacobean Christian humanism displaying values of compassion, virtue, moderation and forgiveness.

- Initially Prospero's anger and desire for revenge influenced his controlling nature.
- Enraged tone, "I will plague them all, even to roaring"
- Ariel's morally guiding statements aid in transforming him and allowing him to gain the capacity for forgiveness.
 - "My affections are moved and so should yours be" and "Mine would sir, were I human" which demonstrates the irony that even a non-human spirit is capable of the compassion humans struggle to obtain.
- Through Miranda's romance and fatherly joy, Prospero is further positioned to overcome his desire for vengeance.
 - Soliloquy – "my charms are all o'erthrown" and "the rarer action is in virtue than in vengeance." Juxtaposition of virtue and vengeance crystallise humanity's need for forgiveness and compassion.

Hag-Seed:

- Atwood appropriates the original whilst maintaining the importance of forgiveness against self-centred revenge. Felix echoes Prospero's desire for vengeance, perhaps more so as he relied on it as a sense of spiritual fulfilment.
 - "He's been chewing on it...he can actually taste it. It tastes like steak, rare." Atwood uses metaphor to reframe Prospero's vengeance as a source of sustenance as he can "**chew**" on it like food.
- Felix imposes exile upon himself where shame leads him away and creates a sense of empathy from the reader. There is no hatred, only

pit from the audience. Self-imposed exile means mercy for himself not his enemies (dissonance).

- Resonating with The Tempest is Miranda, Felix's Ariel, who guides Felix even though she is only a figment of his imagination.
 - "When she was eight, he taught her how to play chess" directly references The Tempest's final scene where Ferdinand and Miranda are playing chess. Dramatic irony is evident when the audience is aware Miranda is not real, and Felix to some extent does too, but as the play progresses, the continuance of this conceit sees Felix forgetting she is only a figment of his imagination.
 - Nevertheless, she also aids in getting his "revenge" in "Felix's enemies had suffered, which had been a pleasure" where the juxtaposition of suffering and pleasure reflects a dissonance in the way the protagonists had been able to forgive.

Illusion/Realism

The Tempest:

- The play serves to connect reality and fantasy through Prospero and the true nature of revenge. Prospero's fantastical journey provides deep insights into his reality of revenge as a source of achieving a sense of reconciliation/reformation.
- Deceptive and illusory nature of theatre → link to metatheatre.
- The Tempest is highly self-reflective and can be viewed as a personal allegory to Shakespeare's life as a playwright.

- The infusion of metatheatricality of Prospero's characterisation projects Shakespeare into the role in his "Our levels now have ended" soliloquy.
- Reminds the audience of the illusory nature of theatre, consequently revealing the play's deep metatheatricality.
- Connotation of "actors" and "pageant" to theatre with metaphors "melted into air" and "baseless fabric" evoke an atmosphere of emptiness which allude to the ephemerality of theatre.
- "the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces, the solemn temples, the great globe itself" – double entendre of "*Great globe*" as it alludes to the "*Globe theatre*" but also demonstrates theatrum mundi.
 - **Theatrum mundi** is a concept whereby life is effectively a play in itself.

Hag-Seed:

- Felix resides into his psyche which becomes the manifestation of fantasy that seeps into his reality. His internal pain becomes the source of connecting reality and fantasy that is directly located with Miranda being appropriated as a voice in his head. Resonating with The Tempest is Miranda, Felix's Ariel, who guides Felix even though she is only a figment of his imagination.
 - "When she was eight, he taught her how to play chess" directly references The Tempest's final scene where Ferdinand and Miranda are playing chess. Dramatic irony is evident when the audience is aware Miranda is not real, and Felix to some extent

does too, but as the play progresses, the continuance of this conceit sees Felix forgetting she is only a figment of his imagination.

- Nevertheless, she also aids in getting his “*revenge*” in “Felix’s enemies had suffered, which had been a pleasure” where the juxtaposition of suffering and pleasure reflects a dissonance in the way the protagonists had been able to forgive.
- Felix’s interior monologue mimics Shakespeare’s statements in “all theatre is ephemeral” and “theatre is the art of true illusions” effectively using oxymoron to create a paradox in which theatre changes the audience’s perspectives on life.
- Atwood reinforces the relevance of theatre onto a contemporary audience to create deeper understanding of theatre as a true and unmodified reflection of human existence.

Essay Plans

Question: (Sydney Technical High School - 2019) (Revenge/Forgiveness)

In what ways do these texts create a conversation about conflict and reconciliation?

Paragraph 1 - Conflict

- **Tempest** → Prospero's anger and desire for revenge influenced his controlling nature "I will plague them all even to roaring" → Because of this he is imprisoned by his own hatred "stuck in his book doing magic"
- **Hag-Seed** → Felix echoes Prospero's desire for vengeance, more so as he relied on it as a sense of spiritual fulfilment. "He's been chewing on it" → Self-imposed exile upon himself.

Paragraph 2 – importance of reconciliation in exploring one's own humanity (Jacobean → Secular)

- **Tempest** → Ariel's morally guiding statements "My affections are moved" "were I human" → Prospero's soliloquy prompted by Ariel & Miranda's relationship "charms are all o'erthrown" "rarer action"
- **Hag-Seed** → Miranda guides Felix but also helps get his revenge "enemies had suffered" dissonance in the way they had been able to forgive. He gains mercy for himself not for his enemies → reflects a secular audience → "to the elements be free" Prospero can be released from his spiritual confinement through letting Miranda go after he gets revenge

Question: (Sydney Technical High School - Trial HSC - 2019) (Imprisonment)

<i>The Tempest - (Epilogue, spoken by Prospero)</i> <i>As you from crimes would pardoned be,</i> <i>Let your indulgence set me free.</i>	<i>Hag-Seed - (Epilogue: Set Me Free)</i> <i>"To the elements be free," he says to her.</i> <i>And finally she is.</i>
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How is imprisonment a central motif that emphasises the value of freedom in the textual conversation between Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and Atwood's *Hag-Seed*? Refer to extracts.

Paragraph 1 Metaphorical imprisonment (Link to value of freedom)

- **Tempest** → Prospero is imprisoned by his anger and frustration and thus limits his capability for forgiveness “stuck in his book doin magic” → Ariel’s guidance → “let your indulgence set me free” soliloquy, Prospero freed of hatred and also reflects Shakespeare projecting himself as the character setting himself “free” as a playwright. Cathartic release.
- **Hag-Seed** → Transcends the idea of spiritual confinement (resonance) within Felix’s self-imposed exile and his grief. Felix was confined by his desire for revenge but also his punishment of himself, exiling himself for 12 years. → “He’s been chewing on it” emphasises the extent of which the need for vengeance crippled his mental and physical state. → “Snap out of it” Felix himself establishes imprisonment as a key aspect of his character arc → His state of spiritual confinement elevated through his imagining of Miranda “chess” → “to the elements” Product of Felix’s spiritual confinement and state of despair being set free.

Paragraph 2 Literal imprisonment

- **Tempest** → Caliban’s characterisation “credulous monster” “thing of darkness” derogatory reflective of European colonialists → Reflects the lack of freedom within humanity and is thus detrimental when Caliban schemes plans to murder Prospero (Imprisonment and slavery corrupted his mind) “batter his skill” → “isle is full of noises” contrast to show

initial goodness of Caliban but the power of prisons to corrupt his soul, emphasising the value of freedom.

- **Hag-Seed** → Transforms the recurring motif of prisons into a literal prison reflective of contextual differences. Rehabilitation aspect of prisons “my island domain” intertextuality
→ Atwood solidifies this concept by reimagining the point of view of the prisoners as an embodiment of Caliban, successfully conveying how dominant social assumptions are used to undermine people. “Monster, monster! White collar crook!” subversive rap performance challenges the way the criminals are viewed with no hope of reform. Atwood thus ironically exposes the corruption of modern politics as the leaders of our society diminish the metaphoric goodness of others. → Value in some sort of freedom or theatre as a way of rehabilitating.

Question: (Rubric General – Form, R&D, Reimagining)

“While form may change, the details between texts and their reimagined versions are more likely to align than collide”

Discuss this statement in relation to your prescribed text.

Paragraph 1 – Metatheatre (Keep referring to dramatic/prose form)

- **Tempest** → **Dramatic form** which elevate the already self-reflective nature of the play which can be viewed as a personal allegory to Shakespeare’s life as a playwright.
 - Infusion of metatheatricality of Prospero’s characterisation projects Shakespeare into the role in “our levels now have ended” soliloquy → Reminds audience of the illusory nature of theatre, consequently revealing the play’s deep metatheatricality.

- “actors” “pageant” “melted into air” “baseless fabric” → atmosphere and emptiness which allude to ephemerality of theatre.
- “cloud-capped towers” → double entendre alluding to globe theatre and theatrum mundi → life is effectively a play in itself (world is a stage) → highlights role of dramatic form in representing ideas.
- **Hag-Seed** → **Prose form** still resonates the dramatic elements of the play → **5 chapter structure to mimic Shakespeare’s Renaissance 5 act structure**. Mise-en-abyme of staging the very play it aims to interpret metafictionally comments on the play’s metatheatricality.
 - Prose form still has the ability to convey ideas of theatre through staging the play. “all shows must go on” resonance between theatrum mundi and the literary trope of “**show**” as a metaphor for life. → “**The life of imagination**” description of theatre creates a paradox in real life consisting of imagination and performance to modernist the concept. Clear alignment.
 - Felix’s interior monologue mimics Shakespeare’s statements in “**all theatre is ephemeral**” and “**theatre is the art of true illusions**” effectively using oxymoron to create a paradox in which theatre changes the audience’s perspectives on life. Atwood reinforces the relevance of theatre onto a contemporary audience to create deeper understanding of theatre as a true and unmodified reflection of human existence → aligning views

Paragraph 2 – Imprisonment/Forgiveness

- **Tempest** → Prospero imprisoned by hatred and thus cannot forgive → “stuck in his book doin magic” trapped by his own knowledge and power when he’s so tunnelled into getting revenge. → Ariel “My affections are moved” “Were I human” guides Prospero and transforms him → “rarer action” humanity’s need for forgiveness and compassion → “Let your indulgence set me free” alludes to Shakespeare’s career too.
- **Hag-Seed** → Aligns with views of the importance of forgiveness in freeing oneself from confinement but also to show morality. “He’s been chewing on it” Felix relies on the thought of revenge to fuel his spirit. → Felix’s spiritual confinement elevated in his imagination where Miranda is only a figment of his imagination but aids in his revenge “When she was eight” irony → “Snap out of it” interior monologue shows his mental disarray as a result of his desire for vengeance (resonance of the detrimental aspect of hatred) → small collision when he keeps USB

Question: (Merewether High School Trial Paper - 2019) (Illusion/Deception)

“Fool, he tells himself. She’s not here. She was never here. It was imagination and wishful thinking nothing but that. Resign yourself. He can’t resign himself” - Margaret Atwood, Hag-Seed

Discuss the interplay of illusion and deception in the textual conversation between Shakespeare’s The Tempest and Atwood’s Hag-Seed

Paragraph 1 – Theatre as illusory

- **Tempest** → Prospero uses theatre to go beyond a mere illusion as it becomes deceptive. This is the main revenge plot → metatheatrical elements play within a play “our revels now have ended” “actors”

“pageant” “melted into air” “baseless fabric” emptiness alludes to the ephemerality of theatre (illusory) → effect on audience (*theatrum mundi*) “cloud-capped towers” life is a play in itself (Deceptive nature of that concept)

- **Hag-Seed** → aligns itself with this idea in “all shows must go on” resonance of *theatrum mundi* and literary trope of “*show*” as a metaphor for life. → “life of imagination” description of theatre creates a paradox of real life consisting of imagination and performance to modernise the concept. “all theatre is ephemeral” “theatre is the art of true illusions” → theatre changes the audience’s perspectives on life. Atwood reinforces the relevance of theatre onto a contemporary audience to create deeper understanding of theatre as a true and unmodified reflection of human existence.

Paragraph 2 – Illusion and deception specifically

- **Tempest** → Illusion and deception are driving forces acting in tandem in both texts in terms of both characterisation and plot. Ariel’s illusion and deception as a manifestation of Prospero’s controlling nature acting upon his desire for vengeance. However, Ariel combats Prospero’s commands and attempts to reason with him and thus transforms him “my affections are moved” “were I human”
- **Hag-Seed** → Felix’s spiritual confinement as a result of grief and anger conceives a portrayal of Miranda as a figment of his imagination and is thus deceiving himself. → “when she was eight” Ironic as she does not exist and Felix forgets that → lets her go “snap out of it” “the elements be free” to free himself from his own deception

Question (Independent 2019) (Reimagining)

In what ways have textual conversations influenced your personal view about values that are able to withstand the test of time and place?

How has Atwood preserved the key themes of imprisonment/theatre/compassion despite a 400 year difference in contextual influences? Reflect on key resonances (withstand time/place) and include personal view (to what extent).

Paragraph 1 – Metatheatre

- **Tempest** → Prospero projects himself into the role in “our revels now have ended” soliloquy → “actors” “pageant” “melted into air” “baseless fabric” evoke an atmosphere of emptiness which allude to the ephemerality of theatre. → “cloud-capped towers” theatrum mundi
- **Hag-Seed** → aligns itself with this idea in “all shows must go on” pointing out a resonance between theatrum mundi and the literary trope of “*show*” as a metaphor for life → “the life of imagination” description of theatre modernises concept. → Felix “all theatre is ephemeral” and “theatre is the art of true illusions” oxymoron → relevance of theatre onto a contemporary audience mimicking the

dramatic features within the text → metafiction to encourage audience to view *Tempest*'s metatheatricity in a different light.

Paragraph 2 – Imprisonment

- **Tempest** → Caliban “credulous monster” “thing of darkness” “fetch our wood” reflects tendencies of European colonialists. → retaliation “batter his skull” “isle is full of noises”
- **Hag-Seed** → Prisoners as an embodiment of Caliban “Monster, Monster!” challenges imprisonment as a way of inhibiting reform (resonance)

Paragraph 3 – Compassion

- **Tempest** → Prospero's character arc “stuck in his book doin magic” “I will plague them all” → “my affections are moved” “were I human” → “rarer action”
- **Hag-Seed** → Felix's character arc “chewing on it” → self-imposed exile → spiritual confinement “when she was eight” → Revenge dissonance (forgives himself rather than his enemies) “Felix's enemies had suffered”

Question (Context and Form)

How have context and form in each of your prescribed texts influenced your understanding of the connections between them?

Paragraph 1 – Context in forgiving

- **Tempest** → Prospero's character arc “stuck in his book doin magic” “I will plague them all” → “my affections are moved” “were I human” → “rarer action” → Link to Jacobean Christian humanism and values

- **Hag-Seed** → Felix's character arc "chewing on it" → self-imposed exile
→ spiritual confinement "when she was eight" → Revenge dissonance
(forgives himself rather than his enemies) "Felix's enemies had suffered" → USB stick technological advancements reflective of a modern, secular society.

Paragraph 2 – Dramatic/Prose form → Metatheatre

- **Tempest** → *Dramatic form* which elevate the already self-reflective nature of the play which can be viewed as a personal allegory to Shakespeare's life as a playwright.
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structure. Mise-en-abyme of staging the very play it aims to interpret metafictionally comments on the play's metatheatricality.

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