Must Do Questions after the “To be or not to be” Soliloquy

“All The World is a Stage”

1. With what significance can we credit our lives if our lives are “just a part”?
2. What if life were “just a dream”? Would that invalidate our existence and beliefs?

Vicarious Experience

1. How do we justify most of our knowledge? Language (someone/something tells us so)? Perception (we see/hear/feel it)? Reason (we “figure it out” in our heads based on other justifications)? Emotion (we intuitively feel it)?
2. What happens when these justifications fail us? For example, Hamlet is not sure about the after-life (“Aye, there’s the rub”). What is the problem with justifying “to be or not to be”?

Ethics

1. What is right and what is wrong, and how do we justify our actions? Consider the following characters:
   1. Hamlet: He is considering suicide
   2. Claudius: He has committed a very serious crime
   3. Gertrude: She has acted quickly … some say hastily
   4. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: They have entered a “deal with the devil”
   5. Polonius: He is quick to do what is necessary to please the king.

Shakespeare Biography

1. His only son, Hamnet, died while he was away at London writing plays. *Hamlet*, the play, appeared soon afterwards. What happens to our lives when we can’t trust our justifications? Consider the following after reviewing Hamlet’s lament of “what dreams may come.”
   1. What might have been a motive for Shakespeare writing the play that he did?
   2. What do you think is the most upsetting thing about losing a family member (person/pet) or friend?