

To Be or Not To Be

EDUCATION

Last updated at 04/09/2026, 8:17 AM

Game	Usage	Distribution	Technical	Involved	Quality
TITLES - To Be or Not To Be GOALS EDUCATIO... Knowledge of player galvanizing experiment DESCRIPTION The choose-your-own-adventure game "To Be or Not To Be" reimagines and remediates William Shakespeare's "Hamlet". The digital game was released in 2015 by the developer Tin Man Games, based on the gamebook by Ryan North (2013). It offers players the option to play as Hamlet, Ophelia or King Hamlet, and manipulate events, thereby altering the narrative. The main object is for players to experience alternative storylines through the decisions they make as the game progresses. The game caters for a varied target audience as it appeals to those with an interest in literature, comedy, and interactive storytelling. Thematic elements include fate versus free will, and formal aspects involve, among others, satire, parody, and the reinterpretation of classic literature through a modern, humorous lens. Though not strictly designed as a serious game, "To Be or Not To Be" may be seen as combining educational content with entertainment, engaging users in active decision-making while also offering insights into the play's structure and themes. The player reads text and selects options that influence the story's direction. TAGS - Literature, Drama, Tragedy, Comedy studies, Gender, Adaptation, Critical reading and analysis GENRE - Adventure - Role-playing games GAME MODE - Single player PLAY TIME - At least: c. 10 minutes, Optimal: c. 20–40 minutes. The duration depends on the choices made. RELEASE - Original Version complete					

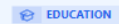
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	APPLICATION FIELD - Education TARGET GROUP - Players – students - Players – pupils - Players – private persons AGE RESTRICTIONS - USK-0 LANGUAGE - English REQUIREMENTS - There are no usage requirements DATA COLLECTION - No data is collected				

FIELDS FOR EDUCATIONAL GAMES



REQUIRED GAMING EXPERIENCE

- No prior experience is required

INTERACTION TYPE

- Simulation

LEARNING RESSOURCE TYPE

- Simulation

DEGREE OF INTERACTION

- As an interactive narrative, "To Be or Not To Be" allows players to experience the play Hamlet in new ways, by playing as Hamlet, Ophelia or King Hamlet. Inspired by traditional "choose-your-own-adventure" books, the game's mechanics involve reading modern, comedic rewrites of Shakespeare's play – blending paraphrased lines, playful narration, and humorous asides – before making choices that affect the narrative's path. Players have considerable control over how the tale unfolds, with more than 100 possible endings. The game's objectives are clearly defined through the narrative, wherein players must overcome the challenges their chosen character faces (e.g. investigating the afterlife, avenging a death or making scientific discoveries). The game uses a feedback method reinforcing players' choices with immediate narrative consequences. Rewards include new storylines, achievements, artwork and replayability.

ACTIVITY THEORY

- -

CONTEXT

- Higher education
- School

DIFFICULTY LEVEL

- Easy

TYPICAL LEARNING TIME

- -

REPLAYABILITY

- Players have considerable control over how the tale unfolds, with more than 100 possible endings.

PROGRESS INDICATORS

- Status
- Success

TEACHING/LEARNING CONCEPT

- Shakespeare is regularly taught in both literature and drama at higher-education levels. By offering different paths, the game offers a way to approach the text by opening up debate, e.g. on gender and character; decisions and turning-points in tragedy (connecting with Rebecca Bushnell's (2016; 2021) work on this); on stories untold and routes untaken. It also offers a way to broaden discussion to retellings of "Hamlet" in other media and genres, e.g. Tom Stoppard's "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead" or Ian McEwan's "Nutshell". It can sharpen critical reading skills, supplementing critical approaches and can be applied to other literary/dramatic works. The game's multiple storylines, centring different characters and plot-junctions, highlight the play's structure and directly engage with discussion topics that tend to arise in class, offering discussion prompts and encouraging student participation.

CURRICULUM/COMPETENCE MODEL

- -

EXPERT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- While in-depth knowledge of the play is not essential to enjoy the game, it does help to make possible more rounded, meaningful and revealing interaction with what the game offers.

APPLICATION SCENARIOS

- For class use, teachers need only familiarise themselves with the game and ensure that students know something of the play. The teacher would then moderate discussion. While class size could make a difference, one classroom practice could involve small-group student discussion of individual experiences/playthroughs of the game, with the teacher guiding comparative discussion integrating Shakespeare's play, thereby priming more searching discussion of "Hamlet". Though it is a single-player game, students can take turns making choices, shaping the narrative collaboratively; alternatively, they may vote for their preferred choice, and be rewarded by the surprising outcomes, potentially prompting different angles on the play.

LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- -

Game

Usage

Distribution

Technical

Involved

Quality



DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

- Download – Steam

BESCHREIBUNG

- digital version

PRICE INFORMATION

- €4.99

COSTS

- -

DISTRIBUTION CHANNEL

- Retail

BESCHREIBUNG

- paperback version

PRICE INFORMATION

- €22.41

COSTS

- -

Game	Usage	Distribution	Technical	Involved	Quality
			PLATFORM - Computer REQUIREMENTS - digital version available on various platforms FURTHER DEVICES - INSTALLATION -		
			PLATFORM - Equipment REQUIREMENTS - none for analogue version FURTHER DEVICES - INSTALLATION -		
			MIDDLEWARE -		

Game	Usage	Distribution	Technical	Involved	Quality
				INSTITUTION NAME - Tin Man Games INSTITUTION ROLE - Developer INSTITUTIONS REFERENCES https://tinmangames.com.au/ INSTITUTION INFO - digital version	
				INSTITUTION NAME - Breadpig INSTITUTION ROLE - Content producer INSTITUTIONS REFERENCES - Ryan North INSTITUTION INFO - original gamebook	

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Game

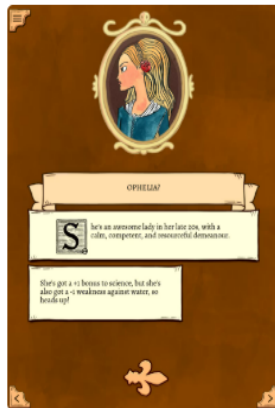
Usage

Distribution

Technical

Involved

Quality



QUALITY ASPECT

- The game has received mostly positive reviews, achieving a "Very Positive" rating on Steam

QUALITY ASPECT TYPE

- Professional ratings

QUALITY ASPECT

- critics praise its humour and creative narrative approach

QUALITY ASPECT TYPE

- Professional ratings

For further information please refer to the following link:

<https://seriousgames-portal.org/en/games/3722d4d2-ee63-4ba4-a919-1066e45b950b>