Characters Acting As a Foil to Hamlet

A foil is a character who serves as a contrast to another perhaps more primary character, so as to point out specific traits of the primary character.

1. Almost all the characters in *Hamlet* act as a foil to Hamlet. Write a short supporting paragraph for each of these characters in comparison to Hamlet. Use examples from the play to substantiate both sides.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Trait** | **Hamlet** | **Trait** |
| **Polonius** | Thick-Headed | **Hamlet** | Clever Wit |
| **Claudius** | Dishonest | **Hamlet** | Honest |
| **Gertrude** | Impropriety | **Hamlet** | Decency |
| **Ophelia** | Emotional Weakness | **Hamlet** | Emotional Strength |
| **Fortinbras** | Man of Action | **Hamlet** | Man of Thought Words |
| **Leartes** | Unscrupulous | **Hamlet** | Has Scruples |

1. What about Horatio? Explain what you think his role in the play might be.
2. Under which trait might you place Rosencrantz and Guildenstern?