The "To be or not to be" Soliloquy Assignment

Critics have interpreted Hamlet's most famous soliloquy in varying ways. Your interpretation will have to be based on what you know of Hamlet's situation, and what you believe he might think about life based on his character and previous soliloquies.

Use the steps below to discover what Hamlet seems to be saying about life, its importance or unimportance, and the nature of the afterlife.

Take the following notes on your copies of the soliloquy or in your notebooks:

1. Take the soliloquy one sentence at a time and paraphrase what Hamlet seems to be thinking.

2. Locate and highlight (in some way) imagery that refers to the uncertainty of death.

3. Identify imagery that refers to the negative experiences of life.

4. Locate, identify, and mark evidence of the following comparisons:
   A. life on earth =
   B. afterlife =
   C. death =
   D. humans =
   E. thinking =

5. Identify at least three oppositions present in the arguments Hamlet makes.

6. What eternal philosophical questions does Hamlet ponder?

7. What conclusions does Hamlet draw?

8. How is Hamlet's 4th soliloquy different from the three that precede it?

RESPONSE:
Write a ONE PAGE, TYPE-WRITTEN response to the topic presented below.

What conflict does Hamlet seem to be most burdened with at this point in the drama? Justify your response with the use of your own commentary as well as quotations from the soliloquy.