***Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead***

1. Read about the Theatre of the Absurd in the text and see the powerpoint? Explain the genre, the purpose, the characters, themes, setting, etc.
2. What is existentialism? How are R and G existential characters?
3. Is this a comedy? Explain 3 examples of comedy in the play using devices of satire and the comedy ladder (SEE DOCUMENTS ON WEBSITE)?
4. Is it a tragedy? Explain using criteria for tragedy and tragic heroes?
5. What is the role of the actors/players in the play? How are they different from humans? What do they say? What does this say about life? Include quotes.
6. What does the tossing of the coin represent? The question game? Words? Pages in the wind?
7. Why are R and G waiting around for most of the play? What do they do to pass the time? What does this represent about life?
8. What scenes are similar to Hamlet? What scenes or passages are altered? Choose 2 and explain. Do the scenes in Hamlet involving R and G have new meaning in this play? Explain.
9. Analyze the style for 1 passage, speech, or conversation in the play.
10. Find examples of the following in the text and explain what each passage means:
    * Life/existence/purpose (memory? actions? motivation?)
    * Death/relief(box, boat, etc.)
    * Chance/action-reaction=sum of choices (coin)
    * Fate/Destiny (Claudius assigns them a task)
    * Freewill/Choice/Autonomy (questions? a time before questions?)
    * God/Afterlife/eternity (direction? answers to questions? knowledge? help?)
    * Reality/Truth (butterfly)

ESSAY OUTLINE: The meaning of some literary works is often enhanced by sustained allusion to myths, the Bible, or other works of literature. Select a literary work that makes use of such a sustained reference. Then write a well-organized essay in which you explain the allusion that predominates in the work and analyze how it enhances the work's meaning.