Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead
Tom Stoppard

Act 1 Questions

1.) What is the significance about the coin toss coming up heads so often? Consider what existentialists might say about issues like laws of nature and probability. What kind of comedy is used here? What themes are suggested about man's control?

2.) What does Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's confusion over their own identity suggest about the significance of identity? How deeply rooted in one's self is identity? What kind of comedy would use this confusion of identity?

3.) How are the traveling tragedians, who are willing to perform pornography on sate (something that should happen offstage…if at all!) similar in their task to Tom Stoppard? What is Stoppard doing with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who appear so briefly in *Hamlet?*

4.) What is the difference between "alternatives" and "choices"? Use the instructions from Claudius and Gertrude to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to make your point.

5.) Why are there so many games about questions? What is the difference between a life that has many questions unanswered and a life where all questions have answers? To use a metaphor: Whose life (few answers, many answers) is contained by a larger box?