

11.1.2

Lesson 3

Introduction

In this lesson, students read the end of Claudius’s monologue to Hamlet, in which he instructs Hamlet to “throw to earth” his grief and to remain at the court of Denmark rather than return to his studies in Wittenberg (Act 1.2, lines 110–121 from “We pray you, throw to earth / This unprevailing woe” to “Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son”). Having previously focused on the development of Hamlet’s character, students now shift their focus to the development of Claudius in this monologue. After reading the new addressed standard SL.11-12.a, c, students listen to a Masterful Reading of an excerpt of Claudius’s monologue and engage in small-group discussion focused on the development of Claudius. After this discussion, they work in pairs to combine their notes and evidence on the characters of Claudius and Hamlet.

Student learning in this lesson will be assessed through a Quick Write on Shakespeare’s development of Claudius’s character in the monologue. For homework, students continue with their AIR through the lens of focus standard RL.11-12.2 or RI.11-12.2 and consider in writing how this section of the monologue develops their views of Hamlet.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.11-12.3	Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
Addressed Standard(s)	
SL.11-12.1.a, c	<p>Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues</i>, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue;

	clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
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Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>Student learning will be assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students answer the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does Shakespeare develop the character of Claudius in lines 110–121?
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an important aspect of Claudius’s character such as benevolence, arrogance, manipulation, or his authoritative nature. Demonstrate how Shakespeare develops this aspect in lines 110–121.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unprevailing (adj.) – futile, useless retrograde (adj.) – (in this context) opposite, contrary
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> immediate (adj.) – following or preceding without a lapse of time chiefest (adj.) – highest in rank or authority; most important; principal courtier (n.) – a person who is often in attendance at the court of a king or other royal personage

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p>Standards & Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.11-12.3, SL.11-12.1.a, c Text: <i>Hamlet</i>, Act 1.2, lines 110–121 (Masterful Reading: lines 110–133) <p>i In order to provide additional context, the Masterful Reading extends beyond the lines students read and discuss during the lesson.</p>	

Learning Sequence:	
1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda	1. 10%
2. Homework Accountability	2. 10%
3. Masterful Reading	3. 5%
4. <i>Hamlet</i> , Act 1.2, Lines 110–121 Reading and Discussion	4. 40%
5. Group Discussion	5. 20%
6. Quick Write	6. 10%
7. Closing	7. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 11.1.1 Lesson 1)
- Student copies of the 11.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool (refer to 11.1.1 Lesson 1)
- Copies of the Character Evidence Gathering Tool for each student (optional)

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
►	Indicates student action(s).
💬	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
①	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

10%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and sharing the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.11-12.3. Students continue their reading of Claudius's monologue to Hamlet. They consider how this latter section of the monologue develops the character of Claudius.

- Students listen.

Remind students that they were introduced to standard SL.11-12.1 and substandard SL.11-12.1.b in 11.1.1 Lesson 2. Inform students that they will begin addressing two new substandards in this lesson:

SL.11-12.1.a, c. Ask students to individually read standard SL.11-12.1.a, c on the 11.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool and assess their familiarity with and mastery of this standard.

- ▶ Students read standard SL.11-12.1.a, c and assess their familiarity with and mastery of this standard.

Instruct students to focus on SL.11-12.1.a, c and to talk in pairs about what they think this standard means. Lead a brief discussion about the standard.

☞ Student responses may include the following:

- Coming to discussions prepared.
- Showing preparedness by producing evidence gained from reading and research.
- Challenging our own and others' thinking.
- Ensuring that different and interesting perspectives are heard.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied their focus standard, RL.11-12.2 or RI.11-12.2, to their AIR text. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson's AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text.

- ▶ Student pairs discuss and share how they applied their focus standard (RL.11-12.2 or RI.11-12.2) to their AIR text from the previous lesson's homework.

Instruct students to form a new pair and discuss the standards to which Claudius holds Hamlet in the first part of his monologue.

- ▶ Students discuss and share to what standards Claudius is holding Hamlet in the first part of his monologue.

☞ Student responses may include:

- Hamlet is being held to the notion of filial duty: Claudius makes it clear that while a period of "obsequious sorrow" (line 96) is a "filial obligation" (line 95), it is "impious stubbornness" (line 98) to continue to mourn in this way.
- Claudius implies that Hamlet is being less than a man when he speaks of "unmanly" grief (line 98). He is holding him to standards of "manliness" not only in opposition to expectations of gender roles but also to expectations of adulthood. A man who persists with his grief as Hamlet does is behaving childishly and not as a man, showing "an understanding simple and unschooled" (line 101).

- Claudius is holding Hamlet to standards of reason, which presents death as “what we know must be” (line 102).
- In Act 1.2, lines 105–106, he holds him to the laws of religion and nature as well as to his duty to the dead: “’tis a fault to heaven / A fault against the dead, a fault to nature.”

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Transition students to a Masterful Reading of lines 110–133 (from “We pray you, throw to earth / This unprevailing woe” to “the heaven shall bruit again / Respeaking earthly thunder. Come away”). Instruct students to pay attention to how Shakespeare develops the character of Claudius.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

Activity 4: *Hamlet*, Act 1.2, Lines 110–121 Reading and Discussion

40%

Instruct students to reread lines 110–121 independently. Then, transition students to a full-class discussion of lines 110–121 (from “We pray you, throw to earth / This unprevailing woe” to “Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son”).

Instruct students to look at line 110 and, in particular, the phrase “we pray you.”

Why might Claudius refer to himself as “we” here?

- 💬 He may be emphasizing his own power and authority.

Explain that the “royal we” is used by monarchs and other figures of authority as a marker of their status. For example, Queen Victoria is famously quoted as saying, “We are not amused.”

Direct students to form small groups in order to discuss the following questions on the text.

The word *unprevailing* (line 111) means “futile, useless.” Given this definition, what is the meaning of Claudius’s phrase “unprevailing woe”?

- 💬 It means “useless sadness,” referring to Hamlet’s grief for his father.

What does Claudius ask Hamlet to do in lines 110–111 (“We pray you, throw to earth / This unprevailing woe”)?

- 💬 He asks him to stop mourning his father, to “throw to earth / This unprevailing woe.”

What does “We pray you” (line 110) mean? What is the impact of “We pray you” upon Claudius’s speech?

💬 “We pray you” means “we ask you.” It softens the request, making it less of a command.

① To help scaffold students’ understanding of the impact of these words, consider asking them to eliminate those three words or to substitute another such as “command.”

How does Claudius develop the central idea of mortality in line 111? Where have we seen him make a similar argument before?

💬 With the phrase “unprevailing woe,” Claudius emphasizes the inevitability of mortality and the foolishness of refusing to accept it. He makes a similar point in the first part of his monologue, when he points out to Hamlet that his father and his father’s father also lost their fathers.

Lead a brief full-class discussion to check for comprehension in which student groups share out their responses to the questions. Note ideas on the board.

Instruct students to return to their groups in order to answer further questions on the text.

What does it mean for Hamlet to be “the most immediate to our throne” (line 113)?

💬 He is the heir to the throne; he will become king after Claudius.

① If students struggle with this, ask them to define *immediate* in the context of the phrase “immediate future”; here, *immediate* means “following or preceding without a lapse of time.”

Explain to students that the word *retrograde* here means “opposite, contrary.”

How does Claudius react to Hamlet’s intention to return to school? How does the word *retrograde* (line 118) help you to understand his reaction?

💬 He is displeased. The word *retrograde* indicates that he does not want Hamlet to leave.

What position does Claudius offer Hamlet in line 121 (“Our chiefest courtier, cousin and our son”)?

💬 He offers him the highest position at court, as a prominent courtier, nobleman, and Claudius’s son.

Explain the meaning of *chiefest courtier*.

💬 It means to be the most important person in attendance at the court of a king or other royal personage.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Ask students which common word they see in *courtier*. They should see *court*. Ask for definitions of a court, which can mean “a place where justice is administered, an area open to the sky and mostly or entirely surrounded by buildings” or, here “the family and retinue of a sovereign.” A *courtier* is “a person who is often in attendance at the court of a king or other royal personage.”
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Ask students which common word they see in *chiefest*. They should identify *chief*. Ask students to infer the meaning of *chiefest* as “most important.”
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students continue to struggle, explain that *chief* is being used here as an adjective, meaning “highest in rank or authority; most important; principal.” Ask students to identify the function of the suffix *-est*. They should recognize that it indicates a superlative. *Chiefest* here means “most important.”
- ① Explain that in Elizabethan times, it was common for noblemen of the same or similar rank to address each other as “cousin.”

What is the impact of placing the word “son” at the end of both the line and the speech itself in line 121?

- 💬 It emphasizes the word “son” by making it the climax of the line, the sentence and the entire speech by someone who isn’t Hamlet’s father but is attempting to take his place.

How does Claudius’s use of language demonstrate his level of comfort with his new position as king?

- 💬 Student responses may include:
 - Claudius’s use of the “royal we” suggests he is a very authoritative figure, comfortable in his role as king.
 - He uses language of authority, for example “let the world take note” (line 112).
 - He “imparts” love to Hamlet, as though it were a privilege or honor (line 116).
 - He offers Hamlet a position, a reminder of his power.

What kind of relationship does Claudius attempt to establish with Hamlet in lines 111–121?

- 💬 Student responses may include:
 - He asks him to think of him as a father, and offers him the highest place at court, suggesting he wants a close and affectionate relationship.
 - He is being manipulative, trying to exercise power over Hamlet: he asks him not to go back to school, offering a position of power as a bribe. He is trying to take the place of Hamlet’s father.

Activity 5: Group Discussion

20%

Direct students to form new small groups in order to discuss the following question:

How does Claudius’s monologue set up a conflict between the characters of Hamlet and Claudius? Cite textual evidence to support your response.

💬 Student responses may include the following

- Claudius criticizes Hamlet severely in his monologue: he calls his continued mourning for his father “obstinate condolment” (line 97) and “impious stubbornness”(line 98) and claims that his grief is “unmanly” (line 98).
- Claudius is attempting to exert his authority over Hamlet: he uses authoritarian language and tells Hamlet that his desire to return to Wittenberg is “most retrograde to our desire” (line 118).
- Claudius is trying to take the place of Hamlet’s father, having already taken his place as King.
- Claudius is manipulative: he wants Hamlet to think of him “as of a father” (line 112) so that he can control him, for example by offering him a place at court in return for his obedience.

① If students struggle, consider using the Character Evidence Gathering Tool as scaffolding. Instruct students to note characteristics on the tool. For each characteristic they note, students must explain their observation and justify it with textual evidence.

Activity 6: Quick Write

10%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How does Shakespeare develop the character of Claudius in lines 110–121?

Instruct students to look at their text and notes to find evidence. Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written response.

- ▶ Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.

① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition students to the independent Quick Write.

- ▶ Students independently answer the prompt, using evidence from the text.

💬 See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

① Keep Quick Writes from this lesson, because students will refer back to them in 11.1.2 Lesson 4.

Activity 7: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread the text and respond in writing to the following prompt:

How does this section develop your view of Hamlet? Cite at least two pieces of evidence from the text to support your claim.

Also for homework, students continue to read their AIR text through the lens of their focus standard (RL.11-12.2 or RI.11-12.2) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Reread the text and respond in writing to the following prompt:

How does this section develop your view of Hamlet? Cite at least two pieces of evidence from the text in support of your claim.

Continue AIR through the lens of focus standard RL.11-12.2 or RI.11-12.2.

Character Evidence Gathering Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Claudius		Hamlet	
Characteristic	Explanation and Textual Evidence	Characteristic	Explanation and Textual Evidence

Model Character Evidence Gathering Tool

Claudius		Hamlet	
Characteristic	Explanation and Textual Evidence	Characteristic	Explanation and Textual Evidence
Kind/Munificent <i>① Munificent is a vocabulary word that students should know from Unit 1 Lesson 5.</i>	Repeatedly offers to be a father figure to Hamlet: “think of us / As of a father” (Act 1.2, lines 111–112); offers Hamlet prominent place at court as “Our chiefest courtier, cousin and our son” (Act 1.2, line 121)	Emotional	Overcome by grief at loss of his father: Claudius describes him as “sweet” in nature (Act 1.2, line 90) and begs him to set down his “unprevailing woe” (Act 1.2, line 111)
Authoritative	He uses the “royal we,” for example “we pray you” (Act 1.2, line 110); he flaunts his power with the phrase “let the world take note” (Act 1.2, line 112)	Stubborn	Claudius criticizes him for his persistence in mourning his father: referring to “impious stubbornness” (Act 1.2, line 98); he refuses to accept the place he is offered as “chiefest courtier, our cousin and our son,” (Act 1.2, line 121)
Arrogant	He attempts to take the place of Hamlet’s recently-dead father.	Childish	Claudius criticizes him for “unmanly grief” (Act 1.2, line 98); his instinct is to flee back to school in Wittenberg (Act 1.2, line 117)
Manipulative	He asks Hamlet to “think of us / As of a father.” He offers him a position at court in return for obedience.		