

11.1.2

Lesson 12

Introduction

In this lesson, students continue their analysis of Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” soliloquy (lines 84–98, from “Who would fardels bear / To grunt and sweat” to “Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered”), shifting their focus from the use of figurative language to the development and interaction of central ideas in the soliloquy and the impact of the interaction of those ideas on the overall meaning of the drama. Students are introduced to standard W.11-12.c, which asks them to focus on utilizing appropriate and varied transitions in their writing. The learning in this lesson is assessed through a Quick Write that asks students to relate one central idea in this passage to others in the play. For homework, students reread the soliloquy and decide whether Hamlet is talking about himself in the line “To be or not to be,” or asking the question more broadly.

Standards

| Assessed Standard(s) | |
|-----------------------|---|
| RL.11-12.2 | Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text. |
| Addressed Standard(s) | |
| W.11-12.2.c | Write informative/ explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts. |

Assessment

| Assessment(s) |
|---|
| 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. |

- Identify a central idea in this soliloquy and explain how it interacts with and builds upon other central ideas from previous readings.

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify that this passage deals primarily with a central idea of action versus inaction, specifically around when it is right to act and the relationship of acting to thinking.
- Identify that in other soliloquies, Hamlet chastises himself for not acting, but in this soliloquy, he describes how thought prevents humans from acting by creating uncertainties about almost every action.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- fardels (n.) – burdens; loads
- pitch (n.) – height (the pitch is the highest point in a falcon’s flight)
- resolution (n.) – a decision or determination; a resolve

Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- conscience (n.) – knowledge, consciousness
- native hue (n.) – native color
- cast (n.) - shade

Lesson Agenda/Overview

| Student-Facing Agenda | % of Lesson |
|---|---|
| Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RL.11-12.2, W.11-12.2.c • Text: <i>Hamlet</i>, Act 3.1, lines 84–98 (Masterful Reading: lines 64–98) <p>① In order to provide additional context, the Masterful Reading extends beyond the lines students read and discuss during the lesson</p> | |
| Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 15% |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| 3. Masterful Reading | 3. 5% |
| 4. Lines 84–98 Reading and Discussion | 4. 55% |
| 5. Quick Write | 5. 15% |
| 6. Closing | 6. 5% |

Materials

- Student copies of the 11.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool (refer to 11.1.1 Lesson 1)
- Student copies of the Short Response Checklist and Rubric (refer to 11.1.1 Lesson 1)
- Student copies of the *Hamlet* Central Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 11.1.2 Lesson 7)

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. |
| ⓘ | Indicates instructional notes for the teacher. |

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.11-12.2. Inform students that today they finish reading Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy and consider some of the central ideas in the text. After a brief whole-class discussion, students have an opportunity to work in small groups before completing a Quick Write.

- Students look at the agenda.

Distribute or ask students to take out their copies of the 11.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool. Inform students that in this lesson they are working with a new standard: W.11-12.2.c. Ask students to read the standard individually and assess their familiarity with and mastery of it.

- Students read and assess their understanding of standard W.11-12.2.c.

Instruct students to talk in pairs about what they think the standard means. Lead a brief discussion about this standard.

🗣️ Student responses may include the following:

- The standard asks us to use different sentence structures.
- The standard asks us to use transitions in our writing to link ideas.
- The standard deals with organizing writing so that it is clear.

① If students need support around the meaning and use of transitions, consider explaining that a transition is a change, and in writing, a transition is a word, phrase, or sentence that signals a change in topic and connects ideas.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied their focus standard, RL.11-12.3, to their text. Lead a brief share out on the previous night's AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text.

- ▶ Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied their focus standard (RL.11-12.3) to their AIR text from the previous lesson's homework.

Instruct students to share their assignments from the previous lesson in pairs. Lead a discussion of shared responses.

- ▶ Student share their responses regarding how the statement “O God, God, / How weary, stale and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world!” from Hamlet’s soliloquy in Act 1.2 is further developed in Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” soliloquy in Act 3.1.

🗣️ Student responses may include:

- The “To be or not to be” soliloquy builds on the one from Act 1.2 by expanding on Hamlet’s negative attitude toward life and the world.
- The soliloquy in Act 1.2 also deals with suicide, which is something that the “To be or not to be” soliloquy deals with as well.

- ▶ Students share their responses regarding how Shakespeare uses figurative language to develop central ideas.

🗣️ Student responses may include:

- Shakespeare uses the image of sleep and dreaming to develop the central idea of mortality. He imagines death as sleep—“To die, to sleep” (line 68)—and the afterlife as a dream: “To die, to sleep— / To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there’s the rub / For in that sleep of

- death what dreams may come,” (lines 72–74), in order to debate the merits of suicide and the possibilities of the afterlife.
- With the image of “this mortal coil” (line 75), Shakespeare develops the central idea of mortality: Hamlet considers life as a constraint, which a man can “shuffle off” by death (line 75).

- ① Remind students that they should be keeping track of central ideas in the play using the *Hamlet* Central Ideas Tracking Tool provided in 11.1.2 Lesson 7.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of the “To be or not to be” soliloquy (Act 3.1 lines 64–98, from “To be or not to be – that is the question” to “Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered”).

Instruct students that they will be assessed on their ability to identify a central idea in the soliloquy and relate it to other passages and ideas in the play.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

- ① Consider playing a different version of *Hamlet* so that students become acquainted with how different actors or readers interpret the soliloquy.

Activity 4: Lines 84–98 Reading and Discussion

55%

Begin by asking volunteers to share their Quick Writes from the previous lesson. Engage students in a conversation about how Shakespeare has portrayed Hamlet’s attitude towards life and death so far.

What conclusions has Hamlet reached so far in the soliloquy?

- ☞ Hamlet believes that the uncertainty of what happens after death forces us to live a life full of troubles. It is this fear of the unknown that causes so much difficulty in life and prevents people from ending their own lives.

Reread lines 84–90 with the class: “Who would fardels bear / To grunt and sweat” to “Than fly to others we know not of” and lead a class discussion of the following questions:

In lines 87–88, what does “the undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveler returns” refer to?

- ☞ Death.

What does “the dread of something after death” (line 86) do? Use evidence from the text to explain your response.

- It “puzzles the will” (line 88). This means that it confuses people or gets in the way of acting.

Paraphrase the line “makes us rather bear those ills we have / Than fly to others that we know not of” (lines 89–90).

- We would rather stick to what we know rather than go towards the unknown.

Ask a volunteer to read lines 91–96 for the class: “Thus conscience does make cowards of us all / And thus the native hue of resolution / is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought, / And enterprises of great pitch and moment / With this regard their currents turn awry / And lose the name of action.”

Lead students in a whole class discussion of the following questions:

What does Hamlet mean that “conscience” makes “cowards of us all” (line 91)? How is he using *conscience* here?

- Hamlet is saying that thinking or the fear of the unknown makes us cowardly or prevents us from acting. *Conscience* means “knowledge or consciousness” in this context.

Instruct students to look at the explanatory notes for the meaning of unfamiliar words such as *native hue* and *cast*.

Provide the definition of the word *resolution*: “a decision or determination; a resolve.”

What metaphor does Hamlet use to compare “thought” (line 93) and “resolution” (line 92)? Explain the meaning of the metaphor.

- Hamlet uses a metaphor of sickness. By “The native hue of resolution / Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought,” Hamlet means that the decision to act (resolution) is healthy, while thinking about it too much makes it seem sick (the pale cast of thought).

How does this metaphor relate to Hamlet’s life?

- He seems to be implying that he is behaving in a sick or unnatural way by failing to act to avenge his father’s death.

Instruct students to work together in small groups to discuss these final questions. Circulate and support as necessary.

What contrast does Hamlet make in the first part of this soliloquy (lines 64–84 from “To be or not to be—that is the question” to “might his quietus make / With a bare bodkin”)? Recall the previous lesson (11.1.2 Lesson 11).

- He describes a contrast between life as a thing full of suffering and the settling of one’s account with life through death.

What is Hamlet contrasting in lines 84–96 (from “Who would fardels bear, / To grunt and sweat” to “turn awry / And lose the name of action”)?

- The main contrast is between thought and action. Hamlet is saying that thought is bad in contrast to action.

What is the relationship between Hamlet’s two major concerns in this soliloquy?

- In the first part, Hamlet considers life and death and says that the fear of death makes us suffer in this life. In the second part, he talks about how this fear (or just thinking in general) gets in the way of our willingness to act.

What central ideas are developed in this soliloquy?

- Student responses may include the following:
 - Action versus inaction.
 - Mortality.
- ① Remind students that they should be keeping track of central ideas in the play using the *Hamlet* Central Ideas Tracking Tool provided in 11.1.2 Lesson 7. Encourage students to record related concepts in the right-hand column of the Tool, noting how these concepts support the development of larger central ideas. Related concepts that arise in this lesson include morality.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

Identify a central idea in this soliloquy and explain how it interacts with and builds upon other central ideas from previous readings.

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

- ① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.
 - ▶ Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.

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

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread the soliloquy and decide whether Hamlet is talking about himself in the line “To be or not to be,” or asking the question more broadly. Students should support their argument with evidence from the text.

- ① An iteration of this question appears in 11.1.2 Lesson 11. Students are encouraged to revisit the question here for homework, after having studied the soliloquy in its entirety.

In addition, students should continue to read their AIR text through the lens of a new focus standard: RL.11-12.4.

Introduce standard RL.11-12.4 as a focus standard to guide students’ AIR, and model what applying a focus standard looks like. Explain to students that they should prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion in which they will apply the language of the standards to their reading.

Standard RL.11-12.4 asks students to “Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)” If students were reading *Hamlet*, they may identify the line “thus the native hue of resolution / Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought” as a central metaphor that is particularly fresh in establishing a new perspective on the problem of thought versus action, which is dealt with throughout the play.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Reread the soliloquy and decide whether Hamlet is talking about himself in the line “To be or not to be,” or asking the question more broadly. Support your argument with evidence from the text.

Also for homework, continue your AIR through the lens of your new focus standard (RL.11-12.4) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.