

11.1.2

Lesson 19

Introduction

In this lesson, students use annotation to focus on central ideas they encounter in Hamlet’s last soliloquy (*Hamlet*, Act 4.4, lines 34–69, from “How all occasions do inform against me” to “My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth”). Earlier lessons in this unit analyzed central ideas within a single soliloquy. This lesson requires students to analyze central ideas as they develop across multiple scenes in the play. This builds on the work students did in the previous lesson and provides scaffolding for the Performance Assessment, which requires analysis of central ideas across the module’s three texts. Students complete a Quick Write to demonstrate their learning. For homework, students reread Hamlet’s soliloquy in Act 2.2 (“O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I”) before writing a paragraph about how both the player and Fortinbras serve as foils for Hamlet. Students also continue reading their AIR texts through the lens of focus standard RL.11-12.5.

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.11-12.9.a	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>a. Apply <i>grades 11–12 Reading standards</i> to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”).</p>

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.

- How do two central ideas introduced earlier in the play continue to develop and interact in Hamlet's final soliloquy?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify two central ideas in the soliloquy, such as revenge, mortality, action versus inaction and madness.
- Identify earlier instances of how Shakespeare handles the same central ideas.
- Explain how the two ideas interact with each other.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- argument (n.) – a statement, reason, or fact for or against a point
- imminent (adj.) – likely to occur at any moment

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

- excitements (n.) – motives or incentives
- blood (n.) – passion (in this context)

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RL.11-12.2, W.11-12.9.a • Text: <i>Hamlet</i>, Act 4.4, Lines 56–69 (Masterful Reading: lines 34–69) <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 to Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Masterful Reading 4. Lines 56–69 Reading and Discussion 5. Small Group Discussion 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 15% 3. 5% 4. 40% 5. 20%

6. Quick Write	6. 10%
7. Closing	7. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Paraphrase Tool (refer to 11.1.2 Lesson 18)
- Student copies of the *Hamlet* Central Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 11.1.2 Lesson 7)
- Student copies of Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 11.1.1 Lesson 1)
- Free audio resources for “How all occasions do inform against me” John Gielgud reading:
[mms://audio.bl.uk/media/shakespeare/hamlet4scene4.wma](https://audio.bl.uk/media/shakespeare/hamlet4scene4.wma)

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 text dependent questions.
	<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%

Review the agenda and share the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.11-12.2. In this lesson, students reread Hamlet’s final soliloquy, focusing on the second half of the passage. Students listen to a Masterful Reading of the soliloquy and then work in small groups to determine central ideas that Shakespeare develops in this passage. After a short class discussion, students respond to a prompt for a Quick Write that requires students to explain how two central ideas continue to develop and interact in this soliloquy.

- Students look at the agenda and follow along.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to form pairs to share their paraphrases of Hamlet's last soliloquy (Act 4.4, lines 56–69) and compare how they paraphrased the lines.

- ① Students who used the Paraphrase Tool to support their homework should refer to the tool as they share.
 - ▶ Students work in pairs to compare their paraphrases of Act 4.4, lines 56–69. See Model Paraphrase Tool in 11.1.2 Lesson 18 for model student responses.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Have students listen to a Masterful Reading of Act 4.4, lines 34–69 (from “How all occasions do inform against me” to “My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth”). As students listen, ask them to note references to some of the play's central ideas in this passage.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.
- ① If students listen to the recitation, consider asking students to share how, if at all, the recitation affects their understanding of the second half of the soliloquy, which they paraphrased for homework.

Activity 4: Lines 56–69 Reading and Discussion

40%

Distribute the Paraphrase Tool to students who did not use the tool to support their homework. Instruct students to refer to the paraphrases they completed for homework as they Turn-and-Talk in pairs to answer the following questions.

- ① Students who used the Paraphrase Tool to support their homework should continue to refer to the tool in this discussion.
- ① Students who did not complete the assigned homework should be able to answer the questions, though they may work at a slower pace.

What is the meaning of “Rightly to be great / Is not to stir without great argument” (lines 56-57)?

- 💬 Great people do not stir without great argument. This means they do not take action unless something is important.
- ① To support students' understanding of *argument*, consider giving the definition of *argument* as “reason” in this sentence.

How does Hamlet think a person should act when honor is at stake (lines 58–59)?

- ☞ A person should argue about even a small matter if the quarrel involves honor.

According to Hamlet’s definition of what it means to be great, is he great or not? What evidence from the play supports your answer?

- ☞ No, Hamlet is not great because he has a very good reason to be doing something (his uncle murdered his father and married his mother, taking over the throne of Denmark in the process) and his honor is involved (someone in his family has been killed and the murderer has not been held accountable).
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Lead a brief discussion with the whole class, based on pair responses. During discussion, encourage students to revise their responses in the Notes section of the Paraphrase Tool. This annotation supports students’ engagement with W.11-12.9.a, as they draw evidence from the text to use in their writing.

- ▶ Students annotate their texts, based on the discussion of the lines.
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Instruct students to reread lines 59–62 (“How stand I then / That have a father killed, a mother stained, / Excitements of my reason and my blood, / And let all sleep”) and refer to the Paraphrase Tool they completed for homework as they Turn-and-Talk in pairs to discuss these questions.

What does Hamlet mean when he says he has “a mother stained” (line 60)?

- ☞ When Hamlet says he has “a mother stained,” he means that his mother has stained her honor by marrying her husband’s brother.

What recent events does Hamlet describe in lines 59–61?

- ☞ He explains that his father has been killed and his mother has been dishonored (in Hamlet’s eyes).

What does Hamlet mean when he refers to “excitements” of his “reason” and his “blood” (line 61)?

- ☞ He means that he has reasons to be angry, both intellectually and emotionally.

① To support students’ understanding of this line, direct them to the explanatory notes.

What does Hamlet mean when he says, “How stand I, then ... and let things sleep” (lines 59–62)?

- ☞ Even though Hamlet is upset by what has happened, he is not taking action.
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Lead a brief discussion with the whole class based on pair responses. During discussion, encourage students to revise their responses in the Notes section of the organizer, and to add to annotations as appropriate.

- ▶ Students annotate their texts, based on the discussion of the lines.
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Instruct students to reread lines 62–68 (from “while to my shame I see / The imminent death of twenty thousand men” to “Which is not tomb enough and continent / To hide the slain”) and refer to the Paraphrase Tool they completed for homework to help them as they Turn-and-Talk in pairs to answer these questions.

What is the relationship between “this army” that Hamlet mentions in line 50 and the “twenty thousand men” he mentions in line 63?

- 💬 They both describe Fortinbras’s soldiers going to war.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider providing the definition for the word *imminent* as “likely to occur at any moment.”

What does Hamlet mean when he says that Fortinbras is sending his soldiers into battle “for a fantasy and trick of fame” in line 64?

- 💬 Fortinbras is going into battle not for any real need, but because he thinks that regaining land will bring him glory and fame.

Based on Hamlet’s definition of greatness in lines 56–59, is Fortinbras great?

- 💬 Student responses may include:
 - Yes, because he is acting on a matter of honor, or familial duty. Even though he will only gain a small piece of land, this action will restore his father’s honor.
 - No, because he is risking men’s lives for a small matter (an “eggshell”) and no honor is involved. His father lost the land in a fair battle, so it is unfortunate but not a matter of honor.

How do Fortinbras’s actions in particular reflect central ideas that Shakespeare introduced earlier in the play?

- 💬 Student responses may include:
 - Fortinbras is going to war to avenge his father. This raises the central idea of revenge, of whether a son has a duty to avenge his father.

- Fortinbras's action, in contrast to Hamlet's inaction, highlights the central idea of action versus inaction.
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Lead a brief class discussion, based on pair responses. Encourage students to add to use the Notes section of their Paraphrase Tool to record their understanding and interpretation of the text, revising annotations and notes, as appropriate.

① During this discussion, remind students of Fortinbras's role as a foil for Hamlet. Remind students of their work with the term *foil* in 11.1.2 Lesson 18 and refer them to their notes for a definition.

- ▶ Students annotate their texts, based on the discussion of the lines.
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Instruct students to return to the beginning of the second half of the soliloquy to reread lines 59–69.

① Now that they have a clearer understanding of Hamlet's description of Fortinbras's plans, students will be able to understand Hamlet's reference to shame when they reread these lines.

Instruct students to refer to the Paraphrase Tools they completed for homework to help them as they Turn-and-Talk in pairs to answer these questions.

Why does Hamlet say that it is “to [his] shame” (line 62) that he sees “The imminent death of twenty thousand men” (line 63)?

- 💬 Hamlet's lack of action, when he believes he has a good reason to act, is shameful when compared to Fortinbras's willingness to take action for such an insignificant reason.

① Again, encourage students to use the term *foil* as they describe Hamlet's behavior in comparison to Fortinbras's behavior.

- 💬 The soldiers have no personal investment in the battle, yet they are marching to their deaths, while Hamlet, who has a strong personal reason for killing Claudius, has not taken action.

How does Hamlet's expression of shame in line 62 develop central ideas that Shakespeare introduced earlier in the play?

- 💬 Student responses may include:
 - Revenge: Hamlet does not want to be a coward and wants to avenge his father.
 - Action versus inaction: Hamlet feels shame because, in the struggle between action and inaction, he has yet to act effectively. Hamlet has already compared himself to an actor who can cry more readily for an imaginary character than he can act to avenge his father.

How do Hamlet’s concluding lines, “O, from this time forth / My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!” (68–69), develop a central idea that Shakespeare has already introduced?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Shakespeare has already introduced the idea of revenge as a possible response to injustice. In these lines, Hamlet decides that he will dedicate himself to revenge.
- Shakespeare has already introduced the conflict between action and inaction, which seems to be resolved in these lines. Here Hamlet says his thoughts will be bloody or not worth anything, suggesting that he is preparing to act and will only allow himself to think along those lines.

Lead a brief discussion with the whole class, based on pair responses. Encourage students to revise their responses in the Notes section of the organizer during the discussion.

- ▶ Students annotate their texts, based on the discussion of the lines.

Instruct students to revise their paraphrases, as appropriate.

① Remind students that they should be keeping track of central ideas in the play using the *Hamlet* Central Ideas Tracking Tool. 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, family duty, and cowardice.

Activity 5: Small Group Discussion

20%

Instruct students to gather texts, Paraphrase Tool, notes and annotations from this lesson and previous lessons to prepare for a small group discussion of the following questions.

What central ideas does Shakespeare develop in this soliloquy that he introduced earlier in the play? What evidence do you have to support your response?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Action versus inaction (Hamlet compares his own lack of action to Fortinbras’s action).
- Revenge (Hamlet decides to avenge his father’s death).

How do two of the central ideas you identified interact with each other?

💬 Hamlet’s inability to make a decision causes him to delay responding to the Ghost’s order to avenge his death.

Instruct small groups to share and discuss results.

Lead a brief class discussion to share group findings.

Activity 6: Quick Write

10%

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

How do two central ideas introduced earlier in the play continue to develop and interact in Hamlet's final soliloquy?

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 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 7: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread lines 34–69 of Act 4.4, and the “O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I” soliloquy (Act 2.2, lines 576–634). Instruct students to write a paragraph about how both the actor and Fortinbras serve as foils for Hamlet.

Also for homework, students should continue to read their AIR text through the lens of a new focus standard: RL.11-12.5.

Introduce standard RL.11-12.5 as a focus standard to guide students' AIR and model what applying a focus standard looks like. Tell students they should prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion in which they will apply the language of the standard to their reading.

For example, RL.11-12.5 asks students to “analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.” Students who read *Hamlet* might say the following: “Shakespeare's choice to begin the play with the guards' nervous interaction with the Ghost establishes a negative, morbid mood for the play.”

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Reread lines 34–69 of Act. 4.4, and the “O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I” soliloquy (Act 2.2, lines 576–634). Write a short paragraph about how both the player and Fortinbras serve as foils for Hamlet.

Continue reading your AIR text through the lens of the assigned focus standard (RL.11-12.5) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.