

## 11.1.2

## Lesson 21

## Introduction

In this lesson, students reread the scene at Ophelia’s grave (Act 5.1, lines 254–289, from “Sweets to the sweet, farewell! I hoped thou shouldst” to “O, he is mad, Laertes, / For love of God, forbear him”) in order to analyze how Shakespeare develops his characters through their responses to Ophelia’s death. This lesson follows a lesson in which students completed a close reading of the scene that explored students’ literal understanding of the text and required them to analyze how the setting of a scene impacts other dramatic elements (RL.11-12.3). Previous lessons in the unit focused on analysis of narrative elements *or* central ideas (RL.11-12.2). This lesson integrates both standards for a complex analysis of how character development (as a textual element) impacts central ideas. This complex analysis prepares students for success on the End-of-Unit Assessment, which asks how central ideas interact and build on each other throughout the play.

This lesson will begin with another Masterful Reading of the scene and a brief close reading of the text that highlights some of the imagery Shakespeare uses. In small groups, students then explore how each character reacts to Ophelia’s death and how these reactions develop the characters and central ideas of *Hamlet*. The lesson closes with a Quick Write in which students explain how Shakespeare uses character development in this scene to develop central ideas in the play. For homework, students reread “My Last Duchess” and write a short paragraph (3–5 sentences) explaining how the setting of the poem is important to other elements of the text.

## 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.
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)	
W.11-12.9.a	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

	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”).
SL.11-12.1.a-f	<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> <p>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.</p> <p>b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.</p> <p>e. Seek to understand other perspectives and cultures and communicate effectively with audiences or individuals from varied backgrounds.</p> <p>f. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</p>

## 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"> <li>How do the characters’ reactions to Ophelia’s death further develop central ideas in the play?</li> </ul>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the reactions of the main characters in the passage (Gertrude, Laertes, and Hamlet) to Ophelia’s death.</li> </ul>

- Identify more than one central idea.
- Explain how the characters' reactions further the central ideas.

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• splenitive (adj.) – quick-tempered</li> <li>• rash (adj.) – acting or tending to act too hastily or without due consideration</li> </ul>
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None.</li> </ul>

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards: RL.11-12.2, RL.11-12.3, W.11-12.9.a, SL.11-12.1.a-f</li> <li>• Text: <i>Hamlet</i>, Act 5.1, lines 254–289</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>2. Homework Accountability</li> <li>3. Masterful Reading</li> <li>4. Act 5.1, Lines 254–289 Reading and Discussion</li> <li>5. Quick Write</li> <li>6. Optional Film Viewing</li> <li>7. Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5%</li> <li>2. 10%</li> <li>3. 5%</li> <li>4. 35%</li> <li>5. 15%</li> <li>6. 25%</li> <li>7. 5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

- Student copies of the Central Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 11.1.2 Lesson 7)
- Copies of the Mourners Chart for each student
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 11.1.1 Lesson 1)
- Gregory Doran's *Hamlet* (2:34:32–2:46:44)

## 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.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<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 assessed standards for this lesson: RL.11-12.2 and RL.11-12.3. Explain that in this lesson, students reread the scene they read in 11.1.2 Lesson 20, focusing on how Shakespeare develops the characters in this scene to further central ideas of the play. Student learning will be captured through a Quick Write that requires students to explain how the characters and central ideas interact in this scene.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda and follow along.

### Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied their focus standard, RL.11-12.5 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.

- ▶ Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied their focus standard (RL.11-12.5) to their AIR text from the previous lesson's homework.

### Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of lines 254–289 from “Sweets to the sweet, farewell! I hoped thou shouldst” to “O, he is mad, Laertes, / For love of God, forbear him.” As students listen, they should think about how the characters express their grief over Ophelia's death.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

**Activity 4: Act 5.1, Lines 254–289 Reading and Discussion****35%**

Remind students that they are rereading the text from 11.1.2 Lesson 20. Here, students begin with a brief review of central ideas and then continue to examine how Shakespeare uses characters to further central ideas.

**In pairs review your notes and annotations to generate a list of at least three central ideas that Shakespeare has introduced and developed in *Hamlet* that are further developed in this scene.**

💬 Student responses may include:

- Revenge
- Mortality
- Action vs. Inaction
- Madness

Instruct students to consider these central ideas as they examine how Shakespeare develops the characters in this scene and to annotate for central ideas, using the code *CI*, throughout the lesson.

① Remind students that they should be keeping track of central ideas in the play using the 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 family duty and morality.

---

Distribute the Mourners Chart. Direct students to form small groups to answer the following questions and record their responses in the “Words/Actions” column of the chart.

**How do Gertrude’s words and actions reveal her relationship with Ophelia in lines 254–257?**

💬 Gertrude’s words are kind and sad; she is gently strewing flowers on Ophelia’s grave. These words and actions reveal that Gertrude was fond of Ophelia. Gertrude had hoped that Ophelia would be her daughter-in-law.

**What do Laertes’s words in these lines reveal about his relationship with Ophelia and his relationship with Hamlet?**

💬 Laertes loved his sister and is angry at Hamlet.

**Why does Hamlet approach Laertes (lines 267–271)? What evidence in the text supports your answer?**

- He wants to confront Laertes. He announces himself as “This is I, / Hamlet the Dane!” (lines 270–271), making himself sound impressive and trying to intimidate Laertes. He is making fun of Laertes’s melodramatic behavior.

### How does Hamlet describe himself in lines 275–277?

- Hamlet says he is “not splenitive and rash” (line 275) yet he has in himself “something dangerous” (line 276), which Laertes should fear.

Provide definitions for these words and instruct students to annotate them:

- splenitive (adj.) – quick-tempered
- rash (adj.) – acting or tending to act too hastily or without due consideration

### Does the text support or contradict Hamlet’s description of himself? How?

- Student responses might include the following:
  - Hamlet is not splenitive or rash; Hamlet has still not taken any action against Claudius.
  - Hamlet is splenitive and rash. He is planning to murder Claudius and has impulsively killed Polonius, thinking he was the King.
  - There is something dangerous about Hamlet because he has a fight with Laertes and has been contemplating murdering Claudius. He has already murdered Polonius and his behavior around Ophelia was disturbing.

### What in the play supports or contradicts Hamlet’s statement that he loves Ophelia?

- Student responses supporting Hamlet’s statement may include the following:
  - Hamlet gave Ophelia tokens of his affection before his father died.
  - When Hamlet hears Ophelia coming, after his “To be or not to be” soliloquy, he says, “Soft you now, the fair Ophelia. — Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered” (3.1, lines 96–98), using a term of endearment for her, even though she cannot hear him.
  - Hamlet tries to be honorable and would not lie about loving Ophelia.
  - He only said cruel things to Ophelia because he knew Claudius and Polonius were listening and he was pretending to be crazy.
  - He only said cruel things to Ophelia because she was returning his gifts.
  - He is grieving now that he has discovered that Ophelia is dead.
- Student responses contradicting Hamlet’s statement may include the following:
  - Hamlet was cruel to Ophelia when she was forced to return his gifts.
  - Hamlet used offensive language to Ophelia.
  - Hamlet didn’t seem to care that Ophelia’s feelings were hurt.

- Hamlet says he values honor but he cannot be believed because sometimes he is saying what he means and other times he is pretending to be mad and says crazy things.
- Hamlet's words are often misleading; he often says one thing and does another.

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion in which groups share out their ideas. Instruct students to add to their charts based on discussion.

---

Instruct students to answer the following questions in their small groups, recording their responses in the "Central Ideas" column of the Mourners Chart.

**Compare Laertes's words and actions to Hamlet's words and actions in this scene. In what ways does Laertes serve as a foil for Hamlet?**

💬 Student responses may include:

- Laertes and Hamlet are both grieving for Ophelia.
- Laertes holds Hamlet responsible for Ophelia's death, but Hamlet does not seem to take any responsibility for it.
- Laertes publicly expresses his anger at Hamlet. Hamlet has only expressed his thoughts about Claudius in private.
- Laertes uses melodramatic language and actions to express his grief. Hamlet expresses his grief and anger more in private than in public, though in the beginning Claudius reprimanded him for wearing black and being excessive in his grief.

**How does Laertes's role as a foil for Hamlet in this scene further a central idea?**

💬 Student responses may include:

- Having Laertes as a foil emphasizes the different responses to mortality. Laertes is very public in his grief, cursing Hamlet, leaping in the grave, and fighting Hamlet as the cause of his father's and sister's death. Hamlet is more private in his grief; trying to find an appropriate means of avenging his father's death, he usually broods and plots.
- Having Laertes as a foil highlights the central idea of action vs. inaction. Laertes does not spend a lot of time thinking about the situation. He curses Hamlet and fights him as soon as he sees him, while Hamlet tries to find the proper response to the ghost's command to avenge the king's murder and delays his action.

Lead a brief, whole-class share out of the Central Ideas from the Mourners Chart.

Remind students that their notes and annotations on this scene will help them keep track of evidence they will be using in the lesson assessment and later in the Mid-Unit and Performance Assessments,

which focus on the development of central ideas. This focused annotation supports students' engagement with W.11-12.9.a, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.

### Activity 6: Quick Write

**15%**

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

**How do the characters' reactions to Ophelia's death further develop central ideas in the play?**

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.

- ▶ 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.

### Activity 7: Optional Film Viewing

**25%**

If time and access allow, consider showing students an excerpt of Act 5.1 from Gregory Doran's *Hamlet* (2:34:32–2:46:44), from the gravediggers' initial conversation until all characters exit the graveyard. Ask students to focus on Hamlet's musings on death.

- ① Viewing this portion of the play supports comprehension by allowing students to experience visually the impact of the setting on other elements of the drama, and offers students the opportunity to examine more thoroughly Hamlet's consideration of death, particularly in relation to his musings about "poor Yorick."
- ① Note that Gregory Doran's *Hamlet* omits some of the banter between the gravediggers, though the general tone of the conversation is clearly light-hearted.

### Activity 8: Closing

**5%**

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread Browning's "My Last Duchess" from Unit 1 and write a short paragraph (3–5 sentences) explaining how the setting of the poem is important to other elements of the text.



Also for homework, students should continue to read their AIR text through the lens of their focus standard (RL.11-12.5) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their texts based on that standard.

- ▶ Students follow along.

## Homework

Reread “My Last Duchess.” Write a short paragraph explaining how the setting of the poem is important to other elements of the text.

Continue to read your AIR text through the lens of the assigned focus standard (RL.10-11.5) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.

## Mourners Chart

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Class:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
--------------	--	---------------	--	--------------	--

  

Mourner	Words/Actions	Central Ideas
Gertrude		
Laertes		
Hamlet		

## Model Mourners Chart

Name:		Class:		Date:	
Mourner	Words/Actions	Central Ideas			
Gertrude	<p>Throws flowers on grave</p> <p>Calls Ophelia “sweet” (line 254) and “sweet maid” (line 256)</p> <p>Says she had hoped Ophelia would be Hamlet’s bride</p>	<p><u>Mortality</u></p> <p>Gertrude sincerely mourns Ophelia as a “sweet maid” (lines 254) and says “I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet’s wife” (line 255).</p>			
Laertes	<p>Curses Hamlet when Gertrude mentions him (“O, treble woe fall ten times treble on that cursèd head” (lines 258-259) and “The devil take thy soul” (line 272))</p> <p>Jumps in grave to be buried alive with Ophelia</p> <p>Fights Hamlet</p>	<p><u>Revenge</u></p> <p><u>Mortality</u></p> <p>Laertes grieves loudly and publicly for Ophelia; Hamlet grieves quietly for his father; Hamlet is prompted to display grief.</p> <p><u>Action vs. Inaction</u></p> <p>Even though Laertes has a well-thought out plan for revenge, he goes ahead and instinctively attacks Hamlet; Hamlet wants to kill Claudius, but has never given in to this urge and still has no real plan.</p>			
Hamlet	<p>Mocks Laertes’s melodrama</p> <p>Fights with Laertes</p> <p>Professes love for Ophelia</p>	<p><u>Mortality</u></p> <p>Hamlet accuses Laertes of making a show of mourning Ophelia while he (Hamlet) is the one who most mourns her.</p> <p><u>Revenge</u></p> <p>Hamlet’s description of himself supports the idea that he is dangerous and capable of taking his revenge.</p> <p><u>Action vs. Inaction</u></p> <p>Hamlet responds to Laertes’s display of grief without considering the situation rather than merely thinking about it; recall Hamlet’s many thoughts about revenge that have not been acted on. Compare to the previous instance of Hamlet’s acting without thinking, when he accidentally killed Polonius.</p>			

Mourner	Words/Actions	Central Ideas
		<p>Even when describing himself, Hamlet expresses the tension between thought (not being rash) and action or emotion (being dangerous).</p> <p>The description supports the idea that Hamlet is reluctant to take revenge because he is “not splenitive or rash,” (line 275) even while he is fighting.</p>