

11.1.2

Lesson 23

Introduction

In this lesson, students finish their reading of *Hamlet* and analyze the play's tragic resolution in which Hamlet, Laertes, Claudius, and Gertrude all die. For the lesson assessment, students analyze how Hamlet's character is developed in the tragic resolution. To support their analysis, students view a film representation of the fencing match and the resulting action.

Students continue to work with standard RL.11-12.3 and focus on Shakespeare's tragic resolution to the play, a specific element of RL.11-12.5. Students also directly focus on using formal style and objective tone in a Quick Write.

This lesson is the students' final opportunity to analyze the development of Hamlet's character in this unit, so they will engage in complex analysis throughout the lesson discussion and on the lesson assessment. For homework, students review, organize, and expand their notes for the End-of-Unit Assessment.

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).
RL.11-12.5	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.
W.11-12.2.e	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. e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
Addressed Standard(s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None. 	

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 Hamlet's downfall contribute to the tragic resolution of the play?
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convey an understanding that Hamlet resolves the play's main conflict (avenging his father's death), but only by bringing about his own downfall and death in the process.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None.
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> felicity (n.) – the state of being happy, especially in a high degree; bliss

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p>Standards & Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.5, W.11-12.2.e Text: <i>Hamlet</i>, Act 5.2, lines 344–398 (Masterful Reading: lines 333–398) <p><i>In order to provide additional context, the Masterful Reading extends beyond the lines students read and discuss during the lesson.</i></p> <p>Learning Sequence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Masterful Reading 4. Film Viewing 5. Lines 344–398 Reading and Discussion 6. Quick Write 7. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 10% 3. 15% 4. 20% 5. 35% 6. 10% 7. 5%

Materials

- Excerpt from Gregory Doran's *Hamlet* (2:52:11–3:00:19)
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 11.1.1 Lesson 1)

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 assessed standards for this lesson: RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.5, and W.11-12.2.e. Inform students that in this lesson they will read and view an excerpt from the final scene of *Hamlet*. Throughout the lesson, students should continue to think about the significance of the play's tragic resolution.

- ❗ Consider reminding students of their work with W.11-12.2.e in 11.1.2 Lesson 16, noting that formal style uses academic vocabulary and standard English grammar, and objective tone describes analysis supported with evidence from the text.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to form a new pair and share their written reflections about how the action of lines 239–332 of Act 5.2 further develops Hamlet's character.

- ▶ Students share their written reflections in pairs.
- 💬 Student responses may include the following:

- This scene further develops the question of Hamlet's madness: Hamlet claims to Laertes that his actions were the result of madness: "What I have done / That might your nature, honor and exception / Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness" (lines 244-246).
- The scene represents a shift in Hamlet's character, in which he moves finally from inaction to action, forced to act by Laertes's actions.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

15%

Explain to students that throughout the lesson they will analyze how Shakespeare develops central ideas in Act 5.2, Lines 333–398 (from "Look to the Queen there, ho! / They bleed on both sides" to "And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest").

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

Activity 4: Film Viewing

20%

Explain that students will view an excerpt from a film adaptation of *Hamlet* that includes the fencing match and the resulting action in Act 5.2 (2:52:11–3:00:19). Ask students to watch with a focus on how the play's conflicts are resolved.

- ① Students should listen to a Masterful Reading of the events portrayed in this film before viewing the film interpretation.
- ① The script of the film nearly matches the text. However, some events in the film have been reordered, and some lines have been omitted. Notably, the film ends with Horatio's words on line 398 and omits all references to Fortinbras in Act 5.2.

- ▶ Students watch the film with a focus on the play's resolution.

Activity 5: Lines 344–398 Reading and Discussion

35%

Transition students to small groups to reread and discuss lines 344–398 (from "It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain" to "And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.>").

Direct student pairs to read lines 344–353 (from "It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain" to "The point envenomed too! Then, venom, to thy work") and discuss the questions that follow, taking notes on Shakespeare's use of language.

What does Laertes mean when he says, "the treacherous instrument is in thy hand, / Unbated and envenomed" (lines 347–348)?

- Laertes means Hamlet is holding a poisoned rapier.

What does Hamlet mean when he says, “Then, venom to thy work” (lines 352–353)? What does Hamlet do after he says, “Then, venom, to thy work”? Use the stage direction for context.

- Hamlet means he wants to use the poisoned rapier to kill Claudius. Then, Hamlet cuts the king with the poisoned rapier.
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Direct student to pairs reread lines 354–398 and discuss the questions that follow, taking notes about events and character interaction and returning to the text for evidence as they do so.

Before Laertes dies, what does he request of Hamlet? What does Hamlet mean when he responds, “Heaven make thee free of it” (line 364)?

- Laertes asks Hamlet to “exchange forgiveness” with him. Hamlet responds “heaven make thee free of it,” which means Hamlet forgives Laertes.

Why does Hamlet ask Horatio to “Absent [himself] from felicity a while” in line 382?

- Hamlet wants Horatio to delay the happiness of death so he can tell Hamlet’s story.

Remind students that a *tragic resolution* involves a reversal of fortune and the resolution of previously unresolved conflicts. Then, direct students to discuss the following questions in small groups. Explain that *tragic hero* is the term used to describe a protagonist in a tragedy who is destined for downfall, suffering, or defeat.

Why is Hamlet a tragic hero?

- Hamlet is a tragic hero because he avenges his father’s death but loses his life and his opportunity to be king in the process.

What aspect of Hamlet’s character leads to his downfall?

- Hamlet’s indecision leads to his downfall. He is unable to avenge his father’s death earlier in the play, which leads to the events of the final scene.

Explain to students that *tragic flaw* is the term used to describe the character trait that leads to the protagonist’s downfall.

Why is the resolution to the play defined as “tragic”?

- Student responses may include the following:

- The resolution of *Hamlet* is tragic because Hamlet resolves the main conflict in the play when he kills Claudius, but the play also ends with a catastrophe that includes Hamlet's death. The resolution is especially meaningful because it ties together several of the play's central ideas including mortality, revenge, and action versus inaction.
 - The resolution to *Hamlet* is tragic because Hamlet resolves the main conflict in the play by killing Claudius, but the play also ends with a catastrophe that includes Hamlet's death in his best friend's arms shortly after avenging his father's death.
- ① The final lines of Act 5.2 include an important series of events in which Fortinbras arrives at Elsinore, claims the crown of Denmark, and orders a military funeral for Hamlet. While these lines are not addressed in the activities of this lesson, they provide valuable opportunities to analyze the development of central ideas and the play's tragic resolution.

Activity 6: Quick Write

10%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt, using a formal style and objective tone:

How does Hamlet's downfall contribute to the tragic resolution of the play?

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 review, organize, and expand their notes and annotations in preparation for the End-of-Unit Assessment.

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

Homework

Review, organize, and expand your notes and annotations in preparation for the End-of-Unit Assessment.

Continue to read your AIR text through the lens of the focus standard RL.11.12.5, and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.