

10.3

Lesson 3

Introduction

In this lesson, students read Act 1.2, lines 110–121 (from “We pray you, throw to earth / This unprevailing woe” to “Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son”), the end of Claudius’s monologue to Hamlet, in which he instructs Hamlet to “throw to earth” his grief and remain at the court of Denmark rather than return to his studies in Wittenberg. Students analyze the development of Claudius in this monologue. Students listen to a masterful reading and engage in small group discussion focused on Claudius’s development. Then students work in pairs sharing their notes and evidence on the characters of Claudius and Hamlet, which they revise in later lessons as they learn more about the characters’ development. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Shakespeare develop the character of Claudius in lines 110–121?

For homework, students reread Act 1.2, lines 110–121 of *Hamlet* (from “We pray you, throw to earth / This unprevailing woe” to “Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son”), and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: How does this section further develop Hamlet? Cite at least two pieces of evidence from the text to support your claim.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.9-10.3	Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
Addressed Standard(s)	
SL.9-10.1.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 grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p> <p><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.A</u></p> <p>Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to</p>

	<p>evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.</p> <p><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C</u></p> <p>Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.</p>
L.9-10.4.c	<p>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 9-10 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <p>c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.</p>

Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to 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 (e.g., benevolence, arrogance, manipulativeness, or an authoritative nature). Demonstrate how Shakespeare develops this aspect in lines 110–121 (e.g., Shakespeare develops Claudius’s arrogance through his attempt to replace Hamlet’s father in advising and controlling Hamlet. Claudius asks Hamlet to think of him “[a]s of a father” (line 112) and says that he gives Hamlet advice “with no less nobility of love / Than that which dearest father bears his son” (lines 114–115). In these lines, Claudius demonstrates that he thinks very highly of himself because he believes he can act like or be a replacement for Hamlet’s recently deceased father. Claudius also demonstrates his arrogance when he tells Hamlet that Hamlet should not return to school because doing so is “retrograde to,” or against, Claudius’s “desire” (line 118). In other words, Claudius suggests that Hamlet leave school because Claudius wants him to, which demonstrates Claudius’s arrogance in believing others should do what he desires.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> beseech (v.) – to beg eagerly for; solicit
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unprevailing (adj.) – futile, useless most immediate (adj.) – next in line of succession retrograde (adj.) – opposite, contrary 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
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> woe (n.) – a feeling of great pain or sadness take note (idiom) – to notice or give special attention to someone or something intent (n.) – the thing you plan to do or achieve cheer (n.) – a happy feeling or attitude

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.9-10.3, SL.9-10.a, c, L.9-10.4.c Text: <i>Hamlet</i> by William Shakespeare, Act 1.2: lines 110–121 (Masterful Reading: lines 110–132) <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. 15%
3. Masterful Reading	3. 5%
4. Reading and Discussion	4. 40%
5. Group Discussion	5. 15%
6. Quick Write	6. 10%
7. Closing	7. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Common Core Learning Standards Tool
- Copies of the Character Tracking Tool for each student (optional)
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist

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 the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.9-10.3. In this lesson, students continue reading Claudius's monologue to Hamlet and consider how the latter section of the monologue develops the character of Claudius.

- Students look at the agenda.

Instruct students to take out their copies of the Common Core Learning Standards Tool. Inform students that in this lesson they begin to work with two new substandards: SL.9-10.1.a, c. Instruct students to

individually read these substandards on their tools and assess their familiarity with and mastery of them.

- ▶ Students read and assess their familiarity with substandards SL.9-10.1.a, c.

Instruct students to talk in pairs about what they think the substandards mean. Lead a brief discussion about the substandards.

💬 Student responses may include:

- Students come to discussions prepared.
- Students show preparedness by producing evidence gained from reading and research.
- Students challenge their own and others' thinking.
- Students ensure that different and interesting perspectives are heard.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Reread Act 1.2, lines 90–110 and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: To what kinds of standards does Claudius hold Hamlet? Cite at least two pieces of textual evidence to support your claim.) Instruct student pairs to discuss their responses to the homework assignment.

💬 Student responses may include:

- Claudius holds Hamlet to a standard 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 holds Hamlet to standards of manliness: Claudius implies that Hamlet is being less than a man when he speaks of “unmanly” grief (line 98). A man who persists with his grief as Hamlet does is behaving childishly and not as a man, showing “[a]n understanding simple and unschooled” (line 101).
- Claudius holds Hamlet to standards of reason, which present death as “what we know must be” (line 102).
- In lines 105–106, Claudius holds Hamlet to the laws of religion and nature as well as to his duty to the dead. He argues that Hamlet's grief is “a fault to heaven / A fault against the dead, a fault to nature” (lines 105–106).

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of lines 110–132 (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.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

What does the audience learn about Claudius in this excerpt?

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

40%

Instruct students to form groups. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss.

Instruct student groups to read Act 1.2, lines 110–121 (from “We pray you, throw to earth / This unprevailing woe” to “Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definition: *beseech* means “to beg eagerly for; solicit.”

- ① Students may be familiar with this word. Consider asking students to volunteer a definition before providing one to the group.
 - ▶ Students write the definition of *beseech* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the follow definitions: *woe* means “a feeling of great pain or sadness,” *take note* means “to notice or give special attention to someone or something,” *intent* means “the thing you plan to do or achieve,” and *cheer* means “a happy feeling or attitude.”
 - ▶ Students write the definitions of *woe*, *take note*, *intent*, and *cheer* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Direct students to the explanatory notes for the definitions of the following words: *unprevailing*, *most immediate*, and *retrograde*.

- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.11-12.4.c through the process of using explanatory notes to make meaning of a word.

What does Claudius mean by the phrase “unprevailing woe” (line 111)?

- ☞ The phrase “unprevailing woe” means “useless sadness,” referring to Hamlet’s grief for his father.

What does Claudius ask Hamlet to do in lines 110–111?

- ☞ Claudius asks Hamlet to stop mourning his father, to “throw to earth / This unprevailing woe” (lines 110–111).

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.” The phrase softens Claudius’s request, making it less commanding in tone.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** To help scaffold students’ understanding of the impact of these words, consider asking them to remove “We pray you” from the sentence or substitute this phrase for a word such as *command*.

Also, to further scaffold students’ understanding of Claudius’s character, consider asking the following question:

Why might Claudius refer to himself as “we”?

- ☞ Claudius may be emphasizing his own power and authority.

Consider informing students that the “royal we” is used by monarchs and other figures of authority as a marker of their status.

How does Claudius develop the central idea of mortality in line 111? Where does he make a similar argument in the beginning of his monologue?

- ☞ With the phrase “unprevailing woe,” Claudius emphasizes the inevitability of mortality and the foolishness of refusing to accept it. Claudius makes a similar point in the first part of his monologue, when he points out to Hamlet that his father “lost a father” (line 93) and Hamlet’s grandfather also lost his father and so on.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Note ideas on the board.

Instruct student groups to answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

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

- ☞ By “the most immediate to our throne,” Claudius means Hamlet is the heir to the throne; he will become king after Claudius.

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

- ☞ Claudius is displeased that Hamlet wants to return to school. 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 “chiefest courtier,” nobleman, and Claudius’s son.

Explain the meaning of *chiefest courtier* (line 121).

- The phrase *chiefest courtier* means to be the most important person in attendance at the court of a king or other royal personage.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with this question, consider asking the following questions:

What word parts help define the phrase *chiefest courtier* in line 121?

- Student responses may include:

- The word “chief” is in the word *chiefest*. Since “chief” can mean the most important and the suffix “-est” means “the most,” then *chiefest* must mean “the highest, most important.”
- The word “court” is in the word *courtier*. Since a *court* can mean “the family and helpers of a king, queen, or other royal person,” a *courtier* must be “a person who works for or helps in the court of a king or other royal person.”
- Therefore, *chiefest courtier* must mean the most important person in the king’s court.

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 ending the monologue with the word “son” (line 121)?

- The ending of the speech emphasizes the word “son” and makes it the climax of the line, the sentence, and the entire speech. The impact of ending the speech with “son” shows Claudius’s arrogance: Claudius is not 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.
- Claudius uses language of authority; for example, he says, “let the world take note” (line 112).
- Claudius “impart[s]” love to Hamlet (line 116), as though it were a privilege or honor.

- Claudius offers Hamlet a position as “chiefest courtier” (line 121), an important position but still a servant to the king, which is a reminder of Claudius’s own power to place people in positions in the court.

What kind of relationship does Claudius attempt to establish with Hamlet in lines 110–121?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Claudius asks Hamlet to think of him as a father and offers Hamlet a position as “chiefest courtier” (line 121), which suggests Claudius wants a close and affectionate relationship.
- Claudius is being manipulative, trying to exercise power over Hamlet: he “beseech[es],” or begs, him not to go back to school, offering a position of power as a bribe (line 119). Also, Claudius is trying to take the place of Hamlet’s father.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 5: Group Discussion

15%

Instruct students to remain in their small groups and answer 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:

- Claudius criticizes Hamlet severely in his monologue. He calls Hamlet’s continued mourning for his father “obstinate condolment” (line 97), “impious stubbornness” (line 98), and “unmanly” (line 98), suggesting that Hamlet is excessive, faithless, stubborn, weak, and childish.
- 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), or in other words, against Claudius’s own wishes.
- Claudius is trying to take the place of Hamlet’s father. He asks Hamlet to think of him “[a]s of a father” (line 112).
- Claudius is manipulative. He offers Hamlet a place at court as “chiefest courtier” in return for Hamlet’s obedience (line 121).

① If students struggle, consider using the Character Tracking Tool as scaffolding. Instruct students to fill in the Character Tracking Tool by noting characteristics. 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?

Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses. Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist 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 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 Students will refer to Quick Writes from this lesson in 11.1.2 Lesson 4.

Activity 7: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread Act 1.2, lines 110–121 (from “We pray you, throw to earth / This unprevailing woe” to “Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son”) and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

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

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

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Reread Act 1.2, lines 110–121 (from “We pray you, throw to earth / This unprevailing woe” to “Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son”) and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

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

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Text:	<i>Hamlet</i> by William Shakespeare
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Character	Trait	Evidence

Model Character Tracking Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Use this tool to keep track of character development throughout the module. Trace character development in the texts by noting how the author introduces and develops characters. Cite textual evidence to support your work.

Text:	<i>Hamlet</i> by William Shakespeare
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Character	Trait	Evidence
Claudius	Kind	Claudius repeatedly offers to be a father figure to Hamlet: “think of us / As of a father” (lines 111–112); offers Hamlet prominent place at court as “Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son” (line 121).
	Authoritative	Claudius uses the “royal we,” for example “we pray you” (line 110); he flaunts his power with the phrase “let the world take note” (line 112).
	Arrogant	Claudius attempts to take the place of Hamlet’s recently deceased father by asking Hamlet to “think of [him] / As of a father” (line 112).
	Manipulative	Claudius offers Hamlet a position as “chiefest courtier” in return for obedience (line 121).
Hamlet	Emotional	Hamlet is overcome by grief at the death of his father: Claudius describes him as “sweet” in nature (line 90) and having both “obsequious sorrow” (line 96) and “unprevailing woe” (line 111).
	Stubborn	Claudius criticizes Hamlet for his persistence in mourning his father, referring to his “impious stubbornness” (line 98).
	Childish/Weak	Claudius criticizes Hamlet for “unmanly grief” (line 98); his instinct is to flee back to school in Wittenberg (line 117).