

10.8

Lesson 8

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze Act 2.2, lines 576–607 of *Hamlet* (from “Now I am alone / O what a rogue and peasant slave am I” to “I should have fatted all the region kites / With this slave’s offal”). This excerpt is part of a soliloquy in which Hamlet criticizes himself in contrast to an actor who has just recited a passionate speech. Students analyze Shakespeare’s figurative language, considering how it contributes to central ideas such as revenge and action vs. inaction. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How do two central ideas develop and interact in this soliloquy? How does the use of figurative language support the development of one of these ideas?

For homework, students choose one of the images Hamlet uses to describe himself in the “Now I am alone” soliloquy and consider how this image is related to the development of a central idea from another soliloquy.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.9-10.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
L.9-10.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.9-10.9.a	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p><u>CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9.A</u></p> <p>Apply <i>grades 9-10 Reading standards</i> to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]”).</p>
L.9-10.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.9-10.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
L.9-10.4.c	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. 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.

Assessment

Assessment(s)

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.

- How do two central ideas develop and interact in this soliloquy? How does the use of figurative language support the development of one of these ideas?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify two central ideas developed in the soliloquy (e.g., revenge, action vs. inaction, etc.).
- Explain how the identified central ideas interact with each other (e.g., The central idea of revenge interacts with the central idea of action vs. inaction as Hamlet criticizes himself in contrast to the passionate actor. Hamlet expresses his disappointment in himself for not avenging his father's murder even though he has "the motive and the cue for passion" (line 588), which develops the central idea of revenge. The central idea of action vs. inaction interacts with revenge because Hamlet admits that he has not been able to avenge his father's death because he is like "John-a-dreams" (line 595) who daydreams instead of taking action.).
- Cite one or more examples of figurative language that support the development of a central idea (e.g., Frustrated with himself for his inaction, Hamlet uses metaphors to negatively describe himself. For example, Hamlet compares himself to a rogue and a peasant or slave: "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" (line 577).).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rogue (n.) – a dishonest person; scoundrel cue (n.) – anything that excites to action; stimulus cleave (v.) – to split or divide by or as if by a cutting blow pigeon-livered (adj.) – meek, mild gall (n.) – bitterness of spirit; rancor; spirit to resent insult or injury offal (n.) – the parts of a butchered animal that are considered inedible by human beings
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> aspect (n.) – face, facial expression unpregnant (adj.) – unfilled by, and therefore never to give birth (to action)
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> peasant (n.) – a poor farmer or farm worker who has low social status appall (v.) – to cause (someone) to feel fear, shock, or disgust

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.9-10.2, L. 9-10.5, W. 9-10.9.a, L. 9-10.1, L. 9-10.2, L. 9-10.4.c Text: <i>Hamlet</i> by William Shakespeare, Act 2.2: lines 576–607 (Masterful Reading: Act 2.2, lines 445–634) <p>📘 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 3. Masterful Reading 4. Reading and Discussion 5. Quick Write 6. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 10% 2. 15% 3. 20% 4. 40% 5. 10% 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 Central Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 11.1.2 Lesson 7)—students may need additional blank copies
- Excerpt from Gregory Doran’s *Hamlet* (1:15:03–1:21:06) (optional)
- 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

10%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standards for this lesson: RL. 9-10.2 and L. 9-10.5. In this lesson, students discuss the meaning of a soliloquy in which Hamlet criticizes himself in contrast to an actor who has just recited a passionate speech. Students also analyze Shakespeare’s figurative language, considering how it contributes to central ideas such as revenge and action vs. inaction.

- Students look at the agenda.

Instruct students to take out their copies of the 11.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool. Inform students that in this lesson they begin to work with two new standards: L. 9-10.1 and L. 9-10.2. Instruct students to individually read these standards on their tools and assess their familiarity with and mastery of them.

- Students read and assess their familiarity with standards L. 9-10.1 and L. 9-10.2.

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

- 💬 Student responses may include:

- Students use proper grammar, without slang, in writing and discussion.
- Students use correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling in writing.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Carry out a brief investigation into the figures of Hecuba and Priam in mythology in preparation for Lesson 8's reading.) Call on individual students to share the results of their investigation.

🗨 Student responses may include:

- In Greek mythology, Priam was the king of Troy during the time of the Trojan War between the Trojans and the Greeks. When the Trojans lost the war, the Greek warrior Pyrrhus murdered Priam in front of his wife Hecuba and his family.
- Hecuba was the wife of Priam and queen of Troy. After seeing the defeat of Troy and the murder of her husband and many of her children, she was enslaved by the Greeks.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

20%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of Act 2.2, lines 445–634 (from “You are welcome masters; welcome all—I am glad to see thee well” to “Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King”). Ask students to note what Hamlet requests of the player and the content of the player’s speech. Inform students that these lines include the visit of a company of traveling actors who have recently arrived at Elsinore.

- ① If students do not comprehend the meaning of *player* as it used in this context, explain that *player* is synonymous with “stage actor.”
- ① Explain that in Elizabethan times it was common for travelling companies of actors to visit palaces and put on plays; actors had to travel from town to town (and castle to castle) to perform until theatres began to open. In England, the first theater opened in 1576.
- ① In order to provide necessary context for this lesson, the masterful reading is followed by questions intended to support student comprehension.
 - ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk to answer each of the following questions:

How does Polonius describe the player’s performance (lines 545–546)? What does this suggest about the player’s emotions?

- Polonius says the player has “turned his color” (line 545) and had “tears in ‘s eyes” (line 546), which suggest that the player lost color in his face and cried. In other words, he acted well and was emotional during his performance.

What two requests does Hamlet make of the player (lines 563–569)?

- Hamlet asks the player and his company to perform the play “The Murder of Gonzago” at the castle the following night (lines 563–564). He also asks if the player can insert some new lines into the play (lines 566–569).

Inform students that they will revisit Hamlet’s requests in future lessons.

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

What does Hamlet think of himself after watching the player?

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 students to annotate for figurative language (FL) and central ideas (CI).

- Remind students to use the Central Ideas Tracking Tool to record central ideas they identify and discuss.

Remind students that annotating helps them to keep track of evidence they use later in the End-of-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.

Instruct student groups to read Act 2.2, lines 576–585 (“Now I am alone. / O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I” to “With forms to his conceit—and all for nothing! / For Hecuba!”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definition: *rogue* means “a dishonest person; scoundrel.”

- 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 *rogue* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definition: *peasant* means “a poor farmer or farm worker who has low social status.”

- ▶ Students write the definition of *peasant* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Direct students to the explanatory notes for definitions of the following word: *aspect*.

- ① Consider drawing students' attention to their application of standard L.11-12.4.c through the process of determining word meaning through the glossary in the explanatory notes.

How does Hamlet describe himself in line 577? What image of Hamlet does this description create?

- ☞ Hamlet describes himself as a "rogue and peasant slave" (line 577). This description creates the image of Hamlet as a weak, powerless character under someone else's control.

Hamlet compares himself to the player who recited a speech earlier in the scene. How does Hamlet describe the player in lines 578–584?

- ☞ Hamlet describes the player as emotional, noting that his face was pale, he cried, and his voice was broken with emotion: "his visage waned, / Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect, / a broken voice" (lines 581–583).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to read lines 586–593 (from "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba" to "The very faculties of eyes and ears") and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *cue* means "anything that excites to action; stimulus" and *cleave* means "to split or divide by or as if by a cutting blow."

- ① Students may be familiar with these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.
 - ▶ Students write the definitions of *cue* and *cleave* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definition: *appall* means "to cause (someone) to feel fear, shock, or disgust."
 - ▶ Students write the definition of *appall* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Summarize the two questions Hamlet asks about the player in lines 586–589 (from "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba" to "the cue for passion / That I have").

- ☞ Hamlet asks why the player should be able to cry about Hecuba, and then Hamlet asks what the player would do if he had Hamlet's motivation.

What figurative language does Hamlet use in line 589 to describe how the player would act if he had Hamlet’s passion? What does this language imply about the player?

- ☞ Hamlet says the player would “drown the stage with tears” (line 589). This suggests the player has powerful emotions.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to read lines 593–607 (from “Yet I, / a dull and muddy-mettled rascal” to “I should have fatted all the region kites / With this slave’s offal”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *pigeon-livered* means “meek, mild,” *gall* means “spirit to resent insult or injury,” and *offal* means “the parts of a butchered animal that are considered inedible by human beings.”

- ① Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *pigeon-livered*, *gall*, and *offal* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Direct students to the explanatory notes for definitions of the following word: *unpregnant*.

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

Why does Hamlet say he is “[I]ike John-a-dreams, unpregnant of [his] cause” in line 595? How does this contrast with Hamlet’s description of the player?

- ☞ Hamlet says he is like “John-a-dreams, unpregnant of [his] cause” because he can say nothing for his father who was killed. This is a strong contrast to the passionate player Hamlet described earlier.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with this question, consider reminding them to consult the explanatory notes for an explanation of “John-a-dreams” and how it relates to “unpregnant.”

How do Hamlet’s descriptions of himself and the player develop a central idea in the play? Cite evidence from the text.

- ☞ The contrast between Hamlet and the player develops a central idea of action vs. inaction in the play. Hamlet criticizes himself for having a motive but lacking the courage to act: “the motive

and the cue for passion” (line 588). In contrast, he praises the player who has less motivation but more passion, so he acts in a powerful way: “his visage waned, / Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect, / a broken voice ... / and all for nothing” (lines 581–584).

What images does Hamlet use in lines 598–602 (from “Am I a coward? / Who calls me ‘villain’?” to “As deep as to the lungs. Who does me this?”) to illustrate that he is a coward?

- Hamlet describes how someone might bully him. He says someone might call him “villain,” slap him in the face or “break[] [his] pate across,” “pluck[] off his beard and blow[] it in [his] face,” “tweak[] [him] by the nose,” and call him a liar or “give[] [him] the lie i’ th’ throat” (lines 598–601).

How does Hamlet say in lines 603–604 that he should respond to the treatment described in lines 599–602? Why does Hamlet say he should respond this way?

- Hamlet says he “should take” (line 603) the treatment because he is “pigeon-livered” (line 604), or weak, and “lack[s] ‘gall’ (line 604), the spirit to act.

Remind students to annotate for the development of central ideas (CI) and the use of figurative language (FL). Remind students that as they annotate they are beginning to identify evidence to be used in the assessments for this lesson and future lessons.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

- ① Consider showing a film interpretation of *Hamlet* to support students’ analysis of the text from this lesson. Gregory Doran’s *Hamlet* presents the lines from this lesson’s reading in 6 minutes and 3 seconds (1:15:03–1:21:06).

Activity 5: Quick Write

10%

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

How do two central ideas develop and interact in this soliloquy? How does the use of figurative language support the development of one of these ideas?

Instruct students to look at their texts and notes to find evidence and to use proper grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. 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.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

Choose one of the images Hamlet uses to describe himself in the “Now I am alone” soliloquy. How is this image related to the development of a central idea from another soliloquy?

Homework

Respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

Choose one of the images Hamlet uses to describe himself in the “Now I am alone” soliloquy. How is this image related to the development of a central idea from another soliloquy?

Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
--------------	--	---------------	--	--------------	--

Directions: As you read, record evidence of central ideas as well as explanations of how the evidence is connected and/or demonstrates the development of the central ideas in the text.

Text:	<i>Hamlet</i> by William Shakespeare
--------------	--------------------------------------

Act/Scene/ Line #	Central Ideas	Evidence, Connections, and Development
Act 2.2, lines 604– 605	Revenge	Hamlet uses the image of “gall” and “bitter[ness]” in Act 2.2, lines 604–605 to develop the central idea of revenge. By failing to take revenge for his father, Hamlet has disobeyed the Ghost’s “commandment” (Act 1.5, line 109). To illustrate this, Hamlet shows himself as meek and mild, lacking the spirit to take revenge for his father.
Act 2.2, lines 595– 596	Action vs. inaction	Hamlet calls himself a “John-a-dreams, unpregnant of [his] cause” (line 595) who “can say nothing” (line 596), and expresses the same central idea of being caught in inaction when he desires and feels obliged to take action.