

10.12

Lesson 12

Introduction

In this lesson, students continue their analysis of Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” soliloquy in Act 3.1, lines 84–98 (from “Who would fardels bear, / To grunt and sweat” to “Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered”), shifting their focus from the use of figurative language to create meaning to the development and interaction of central ideas in the soliloquy. Students also look at how the central ideas in this passage relate to others in the play, and how the interaction impacts the overall meaning of the drama. Students are introduced to standard W.9-10.2.c, which asks them to focus on using appropriate and varied transitions in their writing. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Identify a central idea in this soliloquy and explain how it interacts with and builds upon other central ideas from earlier in the text.

For homework, students reread Act 3.1 lines 64–98 of *Hamlet* (from “To be or not to be—that is the question” to “Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered”) and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: Is Hamlet talking about himself with the line “To be or not to be” or asking the greater question rhetorically? Support your argument with evidence from the text.

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.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.9-10.2.c	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. c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
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.
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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"> Identify a central idea in this soliloquy and explain how it interacts with and builds upon other central ideas from earlier in the text.
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a central idea in this passage (e.g., action vs. inaction, mortality). Identify how these ideas build upon other ideas from earlier in the text (e.g., In Hamlet's first soliloquy of the play, he expresses his grief over his father's death. He exclaims how pointless are "all the uses of this world" (Act 1.2, line 138), meaning he no longer sees the point to living. This is Hamlet's first discussion of mortality in the play. He thinks further on mortality in Act 3.1 when in his soliloquy he observes that the only reason people suffer through life is because they fear what lies beyond in the "undiscovered country" of death (line 87). Also, at the end of Hamlet's first soliloquy of the play, he says that his mother's marriage to Claudius "cannot come to good" (Act 1.2, line 163), implying that something bad should or could happen. But Hamlet feels he must "hold [his] tongue" (line 164), because he is not sure what to do or say and so remains in a state of inaction. In Act 3.1, Hamlet finishes his contemplation about mortality and realizes that to think too much about it dilutes one's "resolution" to act (line 92). From the soliloquy in Act 1.2 to the soliloquy in Act 3.1, Hamlet moves from complete inaction due to grief, to the contemplation of mortality, to the realization that thinking about mortality makes action "lose the name of action" or become inaction (Act 3.1, line 96). In the "To be or not to be" soliloquy, Shakespeare further develops the central ideas of mortality and action vs. inaction by connecting them: Hamlet realizes that thinking about mortality turns action into inaction.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • resolution (n.) – a decision or determination; a resolve
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fardels (n.) – burdens; loads • conscience (n.) – knowledge, consciousness • native hue (n.) – natural color • cast (n.) – shade • pitch (n.) – height (the pitch is the highest point in a falcon’s flight)
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enterprises (n.) – projects or activities that involve many people and that are often difficult • currents (n.) – continuous movements of water or air in the same direction • awry (adv.) – not working correctly or happening in the expected way

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RL.9-10.2, W. 9-10.2.c, L. 9-10.4.c • Text: <i>Hamlet</i> by William Shakespeare, Act 3.1: lines 84–98 (Masterful Reading: Act 3.1, lines 64–98) <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 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. 5% 2. 15% 3. 5% 4. 55% 5. 10% 6. 10%

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
- 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 the assessed standard for this lesson: RL. 9-10.2. In this lesson, students finish reading Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” soliloquy and analyze how two or more central ideas interact and develop over the course of the soliloquy and the text so far.

- 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 a new standard: W. 9-10.2.c. Instruct students to individually read the standard on their tools and assess their familiarity with and mastery of it.

- Students read and assess their familiarity with standard W. 9-10.2.c.

Instruct students to talk in pairs about what they think the standard means.

💬 Student responses may include:

- Students analyze complex ideas in writing.
- Students use transitions in writing to create cohesion.
- Students organize writing so that it is clear.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion about this standard and ask students to volunteer example transitions they can use in their explanatory or informative writing.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle to list transitions, consider posting or projecting a list of possible transitional words and phrases. Review several examples and instruct students to practice using them in their Quick Write at the end of this lesson.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Choose one of two homework options. Option 1: Reread Act 1.2, lines 136–138, in which Hamlet says, “O God, God, / How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable / Seem to me all the uses of this world” and examine how this statement is further developed in Act 3.1, lines 64–84. Option 2: Watch a brief video (www.pbs.org/wnet/shakespeare-uncovered/video/hamlet-with-david-tennant/, 15:45–21:45) and, based on the video, explain how Shakespeare uses figurative language to develop central ideas.) Instruct students to share their responses in pairs.

- ① Consider asking students to form pairs with someone who chose a different option, so they can share their ideas with each other.

💬 Student responses may include:

Option 1

- The “To be or not to be” soliloquy builds on the soliloquy from Act 1.2 by expanding on Hamlet’s negative attitude toward life and the world. In the Act 1.2 soliloquy, Hamlet describes the world as “an unweeded garden / That grows to seed” and is full of “[t]hings rank and gross in nature” (lines 139–140). In the Act 3.1 soliloquy Hamlet further describes the world as a horrible place where people experience “whips and scorns of time, / Th’ oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely, / The pangs of despised love,” etc. (lines 78–80).
- Both the Act 1.2 soliloquy and the “To be or not to be” soliloquy discuss suicide. In Act 1.2, Hamlet wishes that God had not forbidden suicide: “that the Everlasting had not fixed / His canon ’gainst self-slaughter” (lines 135–136). In Act 3.1, Hamlet continues to contemplate suicide: “To be or not to be—that is the question” (line 64).

Option 2

- Shakespeare uses the image of sleep and dreaming to develop the central idea of mortality. Hamlet imagines death as sleep: “To die, to sleep” (line 68), and the afterlife as a dream: “To die, to sleep— / To sleep, perchance to dream. Ay, there’s the rub / For in that sleep of death what dreams may come” (lines 72–74) in order to debate the merits of suicide and the possibilities of the afterlife.

- With the image of “this mortal coil” (line 75), Shakespeare develops the central idea of mortality: Hamlet considers life as a constraint, which a man can “shuffle off” by death (line 75).

- ① Remind students to use the Central Ideas Tracking Tool to record central ideas they identify and discuss.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of the “To be or not to be” soliloquy in Act 3.1, lines 64–98 (from “To be or not to be—that is the question” to “Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered”). Instruct students to listen for the development of central ideas that were introduced earlier in the play.

- ▶ 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:

How do these lines develop one or more central ideas in the text?

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

55%

Ask volunteers to share their Quick Writes from Lesson 11. Lead a brief whole-class discussion about how Shakespeare has portrayed Hamlet’s attitude toward life and death so far.

What conclusions has Hamlet come to so far in the soliloquy?

- 💬 Hamlet believes that the uncertainty of what happens after death forces us to live a life full of troubles. It is this fear of the unknown that causes so much difficulty in life and prevents people from ending their own lives: “For in that sleep of death what dreams may come ... There’s the respect / That makes calamity of so long life” (lines 74–77).

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

- ① Remind students to use the *Hamlet* Central Ideas Tracking Tool to record central ideas they identify and discuss.

Instruct student groups to read lines 84–90 (from “Who would fardels bear, / To grunt and sweat” to “Than fly to others we know not of”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Direct students to the explanatory notes for the definition of *fardels*.

- 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.

In lines 87–88, what does “the undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveler returns” refer to?

- ☞ “[T]he undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveler returns” refers to death, because no one can return from death, which is “undiscovered” (line 87) because no one can report from the dead to explain how death feels.

What does “the dread of something after death” do (line 86)?

- ☞ “[T]he dread of something after death” (line 86) confuses people or “puzzles the will” (line 88), and keeps people from taking action.

Paraphrase lines 89–90: “makes us rather bear those ills we have / Than fly to others that we know not of.”

- ☞ We prefer the suffering that we know to other troubles that we do not know.

How does Hamlet develop a central idea in lines 84–90?

- ☞ In lines 84–90, Hamlet develops the central idea of mortality. He discusses how the “dread of something after death” (line 86) baffles people and keeps them from taking action in life. In lines 89–90, Hamlet comes to the conclusion that most people would rather remain suffering in the life that they know “[t]han fly to others that we know not of” (line 90), or pass into the unknown of the afterlife.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to read Act 3.1, lines 91–96 (from “Thus conscience does make cowards of us all” to “With this regard their currents turn awry / And lose the name of action”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definition: *resolution* means “a decision or determination; a resolve.”

- 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 *resolution* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *enterprises* means “projects or activities that involve many people and that are often difficult,” *currents* means “continuous movements of water or air in the same direction,” and *awry* means “not working correctly or happening in the expected way.”
 - ▶ Students write the definitions of *enterprises*, *currents*, and *awry* on their copies of the text or in their vocabulary journals.

Direct students to the explanatory notes for the definitions of the following words: *conscience*, *native hue*, *cast*, and *pitch*.

- 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 Hamlet mean when he says, “conscience” makes “cowards of us all” (line 91)?

- ☞ Hamlet means that our consciousness, or “conscience” of the mysteriousness of the afterlife makes us cowardly and prevents us from acting.

What metaphor does Hamlet use to compare “thought” (line 93) and “resolution” (line 92)? Explain the meaning of the metaphor.

- ☞ Hamlet uses a metaphor of sickness to compare “thought” and “resolution.” By “[t]he native hue of resolution / Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought” (lines 92–93), Hamlet means that the decision to act is healthy, but thinking too much makes action sick or turns action into inaction.

How does this metaphor develop a central idea in the text?

- ☞ The metaphor of sickness introduces the central idea of action vs. inaction because Hamlet suggests that “resolution / Is sicklied o’er” (lines 92–93), or made sick by “the pale cast of thought” (line 93). In other words, thinking makes action become inaction.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to read lines 64–98 (from “To be or not to be—that is the question” to “Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

What does Hamlet contrast in lines 84–96 (from “Who would fardels bear, / To grunt and sweat” to “turn awry / And lose the name of action”)?

- ☞ Hamlet contrasts thought and action. He believes that thought is bad in contrast to action, because thought can sicken one’s “resolution” (line 92) to engage in “enterprises of great pitch and moment” (line 94), or great and important deeds. Thinking makes would-be great actions “lose the name of action” (line 96), or cease to be action and become thoughts instead.

How do Hamlet’s two major concerns in this soliloquy develop central ideas in the text?

- ☞ At the beginning of the soliloquy, Hamlet considers whether “’tis nobler ... to suffer” (line 65) the agonies of life, or to commit suicide and spare oneself the pain. Hamlet then discusses how a fear of the afterlife and thinking in general keep people from executing “enterprises of great pitch and moment” (line 94). Hamlet’s two major concerns, action vs. inaction and mortality, are two central ideas previously introduced in the play. In this soliloquy, Hamlet pits these two central ideas against each other, because he sees that contemplation of mortality inhibits one’s ability to act.

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

What contrast does Hamlet make in the first part of this soliloquy (lines 64–84 from “To be or not to be—that is the question” to “might his quietus make / With a bare bodkin”)? Recall the previous lesson, 11.1.2 Lesson 11, to support your answer.

- ☞ Hamlet describes a contrast between life as suffering “the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune” (line 66) and the settling of one’s account with life through death: “When he himself might his quietus make / With a bare bodkin” (lines 83–84).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 5: Quick Write

10%

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

Identify a central idea in this soliloquy and explain how it interacts with and builds upon other central ideas from earlier in the text.

Instruct students to practice using transitions in their responses. 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

10%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread Act 3.1 lines 64–98 (from “To be or not to be—that is the question” to “Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered”) and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

Is Hamlet talking about himself in the line “To be or not to be” or asking the greater question rhetorically? Support your argument with evidence from the text.

Introduce standard RL. 9-10.4 and model what applying this focus standard looks like. For example, standard RL. 9-10.4 asks students to “Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.” Students who read Hamlet’s “To be or not to be” soliloquy might say that the metaphor in lines 92–93 (“thus the native hue of resolution / is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought”) is particularly fresh in describing the problem of thought versus action, which is discussed throughout the play.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Reread Act 3.1 lines 64–98 (from “To be or not to be—that is the question” to “Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remembered”) and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

Is Hamlet talking about himself in the line “To be or not to be” or asking the greater question rhetorically? Support your argument with evidence from the text.

Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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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
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Act/Scene/ Line #	Central Ideas	Evidence, Connections, and Development
Act 3.1, lines 84–90	Mortality	Shakespeare further develops the central idea of mortality through Hamlet’s observation that the only reason people “bear those ills” (line 89) of life’s suffering is because no one knows what happens after death and people would much rather stick to the pain they know than “fly to others that [they] know not of” (line 90).
Act 3.1, lines 90–96	Action vs. inaction	Shakespeare further develops the central idea of action vs. inaction through Hamlet’s claim that thinking too much can keep people from enacting “enterprises of great pitch and moment” (line 94) and that too much contemplation can make action “lose the name of action” (line 96), or cease to be action and turn into just thought about action.