

10.19

Lesson 19

Introduction

In this lesson, students use annotation to focus on the central ideas they encounter in Hamlet's last soliloquy, Act 4.4, lines 34–69 (from “How all occasions do inform against me” to “My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!”), in which Hamlet sets his mind to getting revenge. Earlier lessons analyzed central ideas within a single soliloquy. This analysis builds on the work students did in Lesson 18 and provides scaffolding for the Performance Assessment, which requires analysis of central ideas across the module's three texts. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How do two central ideas introduced earlier in the play continue to develop and interact in Hamlet's final soliloquy?

For homework, students reread Act 4.4, lines 34–69 (from “How all occasions do inform against me” to “My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!”) and Act 2.2, lines 577–634 of *Hamlet* (from “O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!” to “Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King”) and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: How do both the player and Fortinbras serve as foils for Hamlet?

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.9-10.9.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> 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.9-10.4.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, or its etymology.
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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"> How do two central ideas introduced earlier in the play continue to develop and interact in Hamlet's final soliloquy?
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify two central ideas in the soliloquy (e.g., revenge or action vs. inaction). Explain how the two ideas interact with each other (e.g., The central ideas of revenge and action vs. inaction interact with each other through Hamlet's shame. In line 62, Hamlet says that it is "to [his] shame" that he has not acted and avenged his father's death. Here the two central ideas are united by Hamlet's shame. Revenge and action vs. inaction further develop and interact at the end of the soliloquy when Hamlet says, "O, from this time forth / My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!" (lines 68–69). In these lines, Hamlet commits himself to finally taking revenge for his father's death: his thoughts will "be bloody" (line 68), or focused on revenge, or they will be worth nothing to him. From Hamlet's shame comes a rekindled desire to act.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> argument (n.) – a statement, reason, or fact for or against a point
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> excitements of (n.) – motives or incentives for blood (n.) – passion
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> quarrel (n.) – an angry argument or disagreement

- continent (n.) – one of the great divisions of land

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.9-10.2, W. 9-10.9.a, L. 9-10.4.c Text: <i>Hamlet</i> by William Shakespeare: Act 4.4, lines 56–69 (Masterful Reading: Act 4.4: lines 34–69) <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. 10% 3. 5% 4. 60% 5. 15% 6. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Paraphrase Tool (refer to 11.1.2 Lesson 18)
- Free audio resource: <https://librivox.org/hamlet-by-william-shakespeare/> (8:25–12:52)
- Student copies of the Central Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 11.1.2 Lesson 7)—students may need additional blank copies
- Student copies of 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 text dependent questions.

	<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 reread Hamlet’s final soliloquy, focusing on the second half of the passage. Students listen to a masterful reading of the soliloquy and then work in small groups to determine the central ideas that Shakespeare develops in this passage.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Reread Hamlet’s last soliloquy, Act 4.4, lines 34–69 and paraphrase lines 56–69.) Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk in pairs about their responses.

- ❗ **Differentiation Consideration:** Students who used the Paraphrase Tool to support their homework may refer to the tool as they share with their peer.

- 💬 See Model Paraphrase Tool at the end of this lesson.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of Act 4.4, lines 34-69 (from “How all occasions do inform against me” to “My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!”). Ask students to note references to some of the play’s central ideas in this passage.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

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

How do two central ideas develop in this passage?

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

60%

Instruct students to form pairs. 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.

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

Instruct student pairs to read Act 4.4, lines 56–59 (from “Rightly to be great / Is not to stir without great argument” to “But greatly to find quarrel in a straw / When honor’s at the stake”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Instruct students who used the Paraphrase Tool for the previous lesson’s homework to refer to their paraphrases as they complete this activity. Remind students to revise their responses in the Notes section of the Paraphrase Tool. This annotation supports students’ engagement with W.11-12.9.a, as they draw evidence from the text to use in their writing.

Provide students with the following definition: *argument* means “a statement, reason, or fact for or against a point.”

- 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 *argument* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definition: *quarrel* means “an angry argument or disagreement.”
 - ▶ Students write the definition of *quarrel* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What does Hamlet mean by “Rightly to be great / Is not to stir without great argument” (lines 56–57)?

- ☞ Hamlet means that great people do not take action unless something is important.

How does Hamlet think a person should act when honor is at stake (lines 58–59)?

- ☞ A person should argue about even a small matter, or “find quarrel in a straw” (line 58), if the dispute involves honor.

According to Hamlet’s definition of what it means to be great, is he great or not? What evidence from the play supports your answer?

- ☞ No, Hamlet is not great because he has a very good reason to act but does not do it. His uncle murdered his father and married his mother, taking over the throne of Denmark in the process, and his “honor’s at the stake” (line 59) because someone in his family has been killed, and the murderer has not been held accountable.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to read lines 59–62 (“How stand I then / That have a father killed” to “and my blood / And let all sleep”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Direct students to the explanatory notes for definitions of *excitements of* and *blood*.

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 he has “a mother stained” (line 60)?

- By “a mother stained,” Hamlet means that his mother has stained her honor by marrying her husband’s brother and murderer.

What recent events does Hamlet describe in lines 59–61?

- Hamlet describes the murder of his father and marriage of his mother to Claudius: he has “a father killed” (line 60) and “a mother stained” (line 60) both by Claudius.

What does Hamlet mean when he refers to “excitements of [his] reason and [his] blood” (line 61)?

- By “[e]xcitements of [his] reason and [his] blood” Hamlet means that he has reasons to be angry, both intellectually and emotionally.

Summarize lines 59–62.

- Even though Hamlet is upset that he has “a father killed” and “a mother stained” (line 60), he is not taking action, and so he does not “stand” up (line 59) to what it means to be great, but rather lets all his problems “sleep” (line 62).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to read lines 62–68 (from “while to my shame I see / The imminent death of twenty thousand men” to “Which is not tomb enough and continent / To hide the slain”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definition: *continent* means “one of the great divisions of land.”

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

What does Hamlet mean when he says that Fortinbras is sending his soldiers into battle “for a fantasy and trick of fame” in line 64?

- When Hamlet says that Fortinbras is sending his soldiers into battle “for a fantasy and trick of fame,” Hamlet means that Fortinbras is going into battle not for any real need, but because he thinks that regaining land will bring him glory and fame.

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

What is the relationship between “this army” that Hamlet mentions in line 50 and the “twenty thousand men” he mentions in line 63?

- “[T]his army” and “twenty thousand men” both describe Fortinbras’s soldiers going to war.

Based on Hamlet’s definition of greatness in lines 56–59, is Fortinbras great?

- Student responses may include:
 - Yes, because Fortinbras is acting when his “honor’s at the stake” (line 59). Even though he will only gain a small piece of land, this action will avenge his father’s death.
 - No, because Fortinbras is risking men’s lives for a small matter, an “eggshell” (line 56), and no honor is involved. Hamlet admires Fortinbras for his decisive action, but not for risking “twenty thousand men” just “for a fantasy and trick of fame” (lines 63–64).

How do Fortinbras’s actions develop central ideas that Shakespeare introduces earlier in the play?

- Student responses may include:
 - Fortinbras is going to war to avenge his father’s death and because his “honor’s at the stake” (line 59), which develops the central idea of revenge.
 - Shakespeare develops the central idea of action vs. inaction by contrasting Fortinbras’s action to lead to “imminent death” of “twenty thousand men” (line 63), to Hamlet’s inaction: he lets the reasons for avenging his father “all sleep” (line 62).

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion of student responses.

① During this discussion, consider reminding students of Fortinbras’s role as a foil for Hamlet. Remind students of their work with the term *foil* in 11.1.2 Lesson 18 and refer them to their notes for a definition.

Instruct student pairs to read lines 59–69 (from “How stand I, then, / That have a father killed” to “My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

- ① Rereading these lines after having established a clearer understanding of Hamlet’s description of Fortinbras’s plans enables students to understand Hamlet’s reference to shame.

Why does Hamlet say that it is “to [his] shame” (line 62) that he sees “[t]he imminent death of twenty thousand men” (line 63)?

☞ Student responses may include:

- Hamlet’s inaction, when he believes he has a good reason to act, is “to [his] shame,” or shameful, when compared to Fortinbras’s willingness to take action.
- The soldiers have no personal investment in the battle, yet they are marching to their deaths, or “[g]oing to their graves like beds” (line 65). Meanwhile Hamlet, who has a strong personal reason for killing Claudius, has not taken action.

How does Hamlet’s expression of shame in line 62 develop central ideas that Shakespeare introduces earlier in the play?

- ☞ Hamlet’s belief that it is “to [his] shame” (line 62) that he has not avenged his father’s death develops the central ideas of revenge and action vs. inaction—showing that Hamlet feels shame about not acting to avenge his father’s death.

How do Hamlet’s concluding lines, “O, from this time forth / My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!” (lines 68–69), develop a central idea that Shakespeare has already introduced?

- ☞ In lines 68–69, Hamlet decides that he will dedicate himself to revenge “from this time forth” (line 68), which further develops the central ideas of revenge and action vs. inaction by showing that Hamlet is recommitting to act in vengeance for his father. Hamlet says his thoughts will “be bloody” (line 69) or not worth anything, which means he is prepared to take revenge and will only allow himself to think along those lines.

Lead brief whole-class discussion of student responses and instruct students to revise their paraphrases, as appropriate.

- ① Remind students to use the Central Ideas Tracking Tool to record central ideas they identified and discussed. 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 morality, family duty, and cowardice.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

How do two central ideas introduced earlier in the play continue to develop and interact in Hamlet's final soliloquy?

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 reread Act 4.4, lines 34–69 (from “How all occasions do inform against me” to “My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!”) and Act 2.2, lines 577–634 (from “O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!” to “Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King”). Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How do both the player and Fortinbras serve as foils for Hamlet?

Introduce standards RL. 9–10.5 and model what applying a focus standard looks like. For example, RL. 9–10.5 asks students to “analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.” Students who are reading *Hamlet* might say, “Shakespeare’s choice to begin the play with the guards’ nervous interaction with the Ghost establishes a scary, ominous mood for the play.”

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Reread Act 4.4, lines 34–69 (from “How all occasions do inform against me” to “My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!”) and Act 2.2, lines 577–634 (from “O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!” to “Wherein I’ll catch the conscience of the King”). Respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How do both the player and Fortinbras serve as foils for Hamlet?

Model Paraphrase Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Read the text in the second column. Write a paraphrase of the text in your own words in the third column. While paraphrasing or discussing, record any notes about the text in the fourth column.

Lines	Shakespeare's Language	Paraphrase	Notes
Act 4.4, lines 56–59	Rightly to be great / Is not to stir without great argument, / But greatly to find quarrel in a straw / When honor's at the stake.	To be great is to only act if you have good reason, but to act strongly, even if the matter seems small, if honor is involved.	
Act 4.4, lines 59–62	How stand I, then, / That have a father killed, a mother stained, / Excitements of my reason and my blood, / And let all sleep,	Why am I doing nothing when my father has been killed, my mother has been dishonored, and my mind and body are ready for action?	
Act 4.4, lines 62–68	while to my shame I see / The imminent death of twenty thousand men / That for a fantasy and trick of fame / Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot / Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause, / Which is not tomb enough and continent / To hide the slain?	I am ashamed that I am not avenging my father's death when I watch 20,000 men marching to their deaths just to gain a piece of land that is so small that it isn't even big enough to hold all of their graves.	
Act 4.4, lines 68–69	O, from this time forth / My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!	From now on if I'm not thinking about revenge, my thoughts are worthless.	

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 4.4, lines 56–65	Revenge Action vs. inaction	Hamlet laments that he has been unable to act on his revenge when he compares Fortinbras’s military action to his own. Even Fortinbras’s troops, who “[g]o to their graves like beds” (line 65) for a cause not directly related to them, make Hamlet feel ashamed of his inaction.
Act 4.4, lines 68–69	Revenge Action vs. inaction	Hamlet decides to recommit himself to acting out his plot of revenge when he says, “O, from this time forth / My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth!” (lines 68–69).