

## 10.23

## Lesson 23

## Introduction

In this lesson, students read Act 5.2, lines 344–398 (from “It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain” to “And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest”) and analyze the play’s tragic resolution in which Hamlet, Laertes, Claudius, and Gertrude all die. To support their analysis, students view a film representation of the fencing match and the resulting action. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Hamlet’s downfall contribute to the tragic resolution of the play?

For homework, students review, organize, and expand their notes for the End-of-Unit Assessment.

## 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.
RL.9-10.5	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.
W.9-10.2.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)	
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)
<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"> <li>How does Hamlet’s downfall contribute to the tragic resolution of the play?</li> </ul>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use a formal style and objective tone.</li> <li>Avoid slang and statements of opinion (e.g., “I think,” “I believe”).</li> <li>Use standard English and academic vocabulary.</li> <li>Convey an understanding that Hamlet resolves the play’s main conflict but only by bringing about his own downfall and death in the process (e.g., Hamlet finally avenges his father’s death by “forcing [Claudius] to drink the poison” (line 357.1). However, because he was unable to kill Claudius prior to the fencing match, Hamlet’s only option is to kill him after his own death is already guaranteed. As a tragic hero, Hamlet also loses his place as the rightful King of Denmark in the process of removing Claudius as the illegitimate ruler of Denmark.).</li> </ul>

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>felicity (n.) – the state of being happy, especially in a high degree; bliss</li> </ul>
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>unbated (adj.) – sharp</li> <li>envenomed (adj.) – poisoned</li> <li>mutts (n.) – actors without speaking parts</li> </ul>
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>slain (adj.) – killed</li> <li>treacherous (adj.) – not able to be trusted</li> <li>treason (n.) – the crime of trying to overthrow your country’s government</li> <li>tremble (v.) – to shake slightly because you are afraid, nervous, excited, etc.</li> </ul>

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards: RL.9-10.3, RL. 9-10.5, W. 9-10.2.e, L. 9-10.4.c</li> <li>Text: <i>Hamlet</i> by William Shakespeare, Act 5.2: lines 344–398 (Masterful Reading: Act 5.2: lines 333–398)</li> </ul> <p>① In order to provide additional context, the masterful reading extends beyond the lines students read and discuss during the lesson.</p> <b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>2. Homework Accountability</li> <li>3. Masterful Reading</li> <li>4. Film Viewing</li> <li>5. Reading and Discussion</li> <li>6. Quick Write</li> <li>7. Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5%</li> <li>2. 10%</li> <li>3. 10%</li> <li>4. 20%</li> <li>5. 40%</li> <li>6. 10%</li> <li>7. 5%</li> </ol>

## 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.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<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

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standards for this lesson: RL. 9-10.3, RL. 9-10.5, and W. 9-10.2.e. In this lesson, students read and view an excerpt from the final scene of *Hamlet*. Throughout the lesson, students continue to think about the significance of the play's tragic resolution.

- ① Consider reminding students of their work with W. 9-10.2.e in 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 take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Reread Act 5.2, lines 239–332 and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: How does the action in Act 5.2, lines 239–332 further develop or refine Hamlet's character?) Instruct students to form pairs and share their responses to the homework assignment.

💬 Student responses may include:

- 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).
- This scene represents a shift in Hamlet's character, in which he moves finally from inaction to action in finally killing Claudius: Hamlet says, "Drink off this potion" (line 357) and then "*forc[es] him to drink the poison*" (line 357.1) so that the "*King dies*" (line 357.2).

## Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of 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"). Ask students to analyze how Shakespeare develops central ideas in this section.

- ▶ 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 are conflicts resolved in the final scene of the play?**

## Activity 4: Film Viewing

20%

Show an excerpt from Gregory Doran’s 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 focus on how the play’s conflicts are resolved.

- ① This film excerpt portrays the events of the masterful reading in Lesson 22 and Lesson 23, so students will have listened to the events of the excerpt before viewing the film interpretation.
- ① Although the film’s script almost matches Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, some events in the film were reordered and some lines 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: Reading and Discussion

40%

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.

Instruct student pairs to read lines 344–398 (from “It is here, Hamlet. Hamlet, thou art slain” to “And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definition: *felicity* means “the state of being happy, especially in a high degree; bliss.”

- 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 *felicity* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *slain* means “killed,” *treacherous* means “not able to be trusted,” *treason* means “the crime of trying to overthrow your country’s government,” and *tremble* means “to shake slightly because you are afraid, nervous, excited, etc.”
  - ▶ Students write the definitions of *slain*, *treacherous*, *treason*, and *tremble* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Direct students to the explanatory notes for definitions of the following words: *unbated*, *envenomed*, and *mutes*.

- ① Consider drawing students' attention to their application of standard L. 9-10.4.c through the process of using the explanatory notes to make meaning of a word.

**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 or a sword that has been "envenomed" (line 348), or covered with poison.

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

- Hamlet means he wants to use the poisoned rapier to kill Claudius. He then cuts Claudius with the poisoned rapier as the stage direction indicates: "*Hurts the King*" (line 353.1).

**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 "[e]xchange forgiveness" with him (line 361). Hamlet responds, "Heaven make thee free of it," which means Hamlet forgives Laertes.

**Why does Hamlet ask Horatio to "[a]bsent [himself] from felicity a while" (line 382)?**

- Hamlet wants Horatio to delay the happiness of death so he can tell Hamlet's story or "draw [his] breath in pain / To tell [Hamlet's] story" (lines 383–384).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Remind students that a *tragic resolution* involves a reversal of fortune and the resolution of previously unresolved conflicts. Inform students that *tragic hero* is the term used to describe a protagonist in a tragedy who is destined for downfall, suffering, or defeat.

Instruct student pairs to discuss the following questions before sharing out with the class.

**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. His indecision makes him 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* means “the character trait that leads to a protagonist’s downfall.”

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

💬 Student responses may include:

- 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 in his best friend’s arms.
- The resolution is especially meaningful because it ties together several of the play’s central ideas including mortality, revenge, and action vs. inaction.

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.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

## Activity 6: Quick Write

**10%**

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

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

Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses. Remind students to use a formal style and objective tone. 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 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.

## Homework

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