11.1.2  Lesson 16

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze Act 3.3, lines 40–103 (from “O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven” to “Words without thoughts never to heaven go”). This reading includes two soliloquies: Claudius’s confession to the murder and Hamlet’s decision to delay killing Claudius until a “more horrid” time (line 93). Students engage in a discussion about how Shakespeare orders the action and further develops the characters of Claudius and Hamlet through these soliloquies. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: What is the impact of pairing Claudius’s confession with Hamlet’s “Now might I do it” soliloquy?

For homework, students continue to read their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) texts through the lens of focus standard RL.11-12.4 or RI.11-12.4.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RL.11-12.3</td>
<td>Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| W.11-12.2.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)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
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| L.11-12.4.c | Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, 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.

- What is the impact of pairing Claudius’s confession with Hamlet’s “Now might I do it” soliloquy?

### High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify one or more specific ways in which the pairing of the confession and the soliloquy impacts the text (e.g., The contrast between Claudius and Hamlet illustrates Hamlet’s indecision. The pairing sets up a contrast between Hamlet and Claudius in relation to the central idea of action vs. inaction. Claudius acted to take what he wanted—the “crown” and the “queen” (line 59)—by killing his brother. Hamlet fails to take action in this passage and instead waits for a “more horrid hent” (line 93), or a time when Claudius is sinning, to kill Claudius so that Claudius does not go to heaven. (Hamlet believes Claudius is praying and if killed would go to heaven). Hamlet’s misunderstanding continues his inaction, while Claudius contemplates the criminal actions he has already taken.).

## Vocabulary

### Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- arras (n.) – a wall hanging, as a tapestry or similar object

### Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- audit (n.) – final account

### Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)

- whereto (prep.) – to which
- gilded (adj.) – covered with a thin layer of gold
- repentance (n.) – a feeling that one is sorry for something bad or wrong that one did, and wants to do what is right
- relish (n.) – enjoyment of or delight in something
Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards &amp; Text:</th>
<th>% of Lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Standards: RL.11-12.3, W.11-12.2.e, L.11-12.4.c</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Text: Hamlet by William Shakespeare, Act 3.3: lines 40–103 (Masterful Reading: lines 29–103)</td>
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</table>

ⓘ In order to provide additional context, the masterful reading extends beyond the lines students read and discuss during the lesson.

Learning Sequence:

1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 1. 10%
2. Homework Accountability 2. 15%
3. Masterful Reading 3. 10%
4. Reading and Discussion 4. 50%
5. Quick Write 5. 10%
6. Closing 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 Character Tracking Tool (refer to 11.1.2 Lesson 3)—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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Type of Text &amp; Interpretation of the Symbol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no symbol</td>
<td>Plain text indicates teacher action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶</td>
<td>Indicates student action(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➳</td>
<td>Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ⓘ</td>
<td>Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda 10%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.11-12.3. In this lesson, student pairs read two soliloquies and consider how they further develop elements of the play.

- 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.11-12.2.e. 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.11-12.2.e.

Instruct students to talk in pairs about what they think this standard means. Lead a brief discussion about the standard.

Student responses may include:

- Students write using correct spelling and grammar.
- Students write using a formal, not a casual, style.
- Students avoid slang in writing.
- Students support their claims with facts rather than stating their opinion or bias.
- Students avoid statements like “I think” and “I believe” in favor of statements like “Shakespeare develops” and “Shakespeare uses.”

If students do not correctly define formal and objective, explain that formal style uses academic vocabulary and standard English grammar, and objective tone describes analysis supported with evidence from the text.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability 15%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied focus standard RL.11-12.4 or RI.11-12.4 to their AIR texts. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson’s AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied focus standard RL.11-12.4 or RI.11-12.4 to their AIR texts.

- Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied the focus standard to their AIR texts from the previous lesson’s homework.

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Reread Act 3.1, lines 1–203 and review your notes and annotations on the whole scene. Then write an objective
summary of the scene. Use vocabulary from 11.1.2 Lessons 11–15 wherever possible in your written response. Remember to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide your written response.) Ask for volunteers to read their objective summaries of Act 3.1.

- Student responses may include:
  - Rosencrantz and Guildenstern discuss Hamlet’s madness with the King and Queen.
  - Claudius and Gertrude agree to watch the play performed by the players.
  - The King and Polonius have planned that Ophelia should encounter Hamlet as if by accident, so that they can watch and see if he is mad with love for her.
  - The Queen hopes that it is love that causes Hamlet’s strange behavior.
  - Claudius and Polonius hide to watch the encounter.
  - Hamlet contemplates suicide in his “To be or not to be” (line 64) soliloquy.
  - Ophelia meets Hamlet and attempts to return the remembrances that he gave her.
  - Hamlet claims that he did not give her anything.
  - Hamlet is cruel to Ophelia: he denies that he ever loved Ophelia; he tells her to go to a nunnery, which is an insult about her chastity.
  - Ophelia laments Hamlet’s madness.
  - Polonius and the King come out of hiding.
  - Claudius decides that Hamlet does not love Ophelia.
  - Polonius and Claudius decide that Hamlet should be sent away to England.

**Activity 3: Masterful Reading**

Have students listen to a masterful reading of Act 3.3, lines 29–103 (from “My lord, he’s going to his mother’s closet” to “Words without thoughts never to heaven go”). Ask students to note what Polonius plans to do and what decision Hamlet makes upon entering the scene.

- 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 does Shakespeare further develop Claudius and Hamlet in this scene?

Provide students with the following definition: *arras* means “a wall hanging, as a tapestry or similar object.”

- 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 *arras* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
In order to provide necessary context for this lesson, the masterful reading is followed by Turn-and-Talk questions intended to support student comprehension.

To whom is Polonius referring when he says, “he’s going to his mother’s closet” in line 29?

- Polonius is referring to Hamlet going to Gertrude’s closet.

What does Polonius plan to do in the Queen’s closet (lines 30–31)? What reason does Polonius give for his plan (lines 34–36)?

- Polonius plans to hide behind a wall hanging in the closet: “Behind the arras I’ll convey myself” (line 30). Polonius wants to eavesdrop on Hamlet’s conversation with the Queen: “To hear the process” (line 31).

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

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 Character Tracking Tool to record character development they identify and discuss.

Instruct student pairs to read lines 40–60 (from “O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven” to “May one be pardoned and retain th’ offense?”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

1. Differentiation Consideration: Consider providing students with the following definition: whereto means “to which.”
   - Students write the definition of whereto on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Which characters are on stage when Claudius says, “O, my offense is rank” (line 40)?

- Claudius is alone on stage.

To what “offense” does Claudius refer in line 40?

- Claudius’s “offense” (line 40) is killing Hamlet’s father.

Consider directing students’ attention to the Bible references in the explanatory notes. Explain to students that Genesis, Ezekiel, and Matthew are books in the Bible; the explanatory notes cite these books to show where Shakespeare is referring to concepts or stories from the Bible.
What is Claudius trying to do when he is alone on stage? Why does he say, “Pray can I not” in line 42?

Claudius is trying to pray, but he is unable to start praying because of his guilt: “My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent” (line 44).

What “cannot be” (line 57), according to Claudius? What explanation does Claudius give for believing this?

Claudius believes he cannot be forgiven for the “foul murder” (line 56) because he still possesses the “crown,” “ambition,” and “queen” (line 59) he gained from the crime.

How does Claudius’s attempt to pray further develop his character?

Claudius’s attempt to pray confirms that he is fully aware of his “offense” (line 60) and his guilt, but he is unwilling to apologize or give up his power; the reader learns that Claudius is self-aware about his evil nature.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to read lines 61–76 (from “In the corrupted currents of this world” to “Be soft as sinews of the newborn babe. / All may be well”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Differentiation Consideration: Consider providing students with the following definitions: gilded means “covered with a thin layer of gold” and repentance means “a feeling that one is sorry for something bad or wrong that one did, and wants to do what is right.”

Students write the definitions of gilded and repentance on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

How is “this world” (line 61) different from “above” (line 64), according to Claudius? Use the explanatory notes to clarify unfamiliar words and phrases.

According the Claudius, “this world” (line 61) is corrupted, and money can help people escape justice, but “above” in heaven (line 64), people cannot escape the consequences of their actions.

How does Claudius describe his soul in lines 72–73? How do these descriptions contribute to the development of Claudius’s character?

Claudius describes his soul as trapped, tangled, and “struggling to be free” (line 72). By describing his soul this way Claudius reveals his powerful sense of guilt.
Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to read lines 77–101 (from “Now might I do it pat, now he is a-praying” to “This physic but prolongs thy sickly days”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Differentiation Consideration: Consider providing students with the following definition: *relish* means “enjoyment of or delight in something.”
- Students write the definition of *relish* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

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

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.

When Hamlet enters the scene, what does he observe? What does Hamlet believe Claudius is doing?
- When Hamlet enters the scene, he sees Claudius kneeling, so Hamlet believes Claudius “is a-praying” (line 77).

What effect does the stage direction in line 78 have on the mood of the lines that follow?
- Hamlet “draws his sword” (line 78) while he is speaking. This action creates tension and anticipation as the audience expects Hamlet to kill Claudius.

Paraphrase Hamlet’s description of how Claudius killed Hamlet’s father in lines 85–87.
- Claudius killed Hamlet’s father without warning, so he may not have been prepared to die.

What stops Hamlet from killing Claudius at this point in the play?
- Hamlet believes that killing Claudius during a prayer will send Claudius to heaven. Hamlet says, “am I then revenged / To take him in the purging of his soul, / When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?” (lines 89–91).

How does the stage direction between lines 93 and 94 impact the mood of the scene? How does this action develop Hamlet’s character?
- Hamlet “sheathes his sword” (line 93.1), which reduces the tension and suspense of the scene. This action, following Hamlet’s drawing of the sword, provides another example of Hamlet’s indecisiveness.
Stage directions are identified using “0.1” in the line reference to show that the stage direction follows the numbered line.

How does Hamlet resolve to kill Claudius? Explain Hamlet’s reasoning.

- Hamlet resolves wait for a “more horrid hent” (line 93), or a more horrible time to kill Claudius, like while he is drunk, angry, sleeping with the Queen, or swearing. Hamlet wants to kill Claudius in a way that will send Claudius to hell, not heaven.

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

**What does Hamlet wish upon Claudius in lines 98–100?**

- Hamlet wants Claudius to go to hell.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to read lines 102–103 (“My words fly up, my thoughts remain below; / Words without thoughts never to heaven go.”) and answer the following question before sharing out with the class.

**What does this final couplet of Act 3.3 suggest about Claudius’s prayer?**

- Claudius believes his prayer cannot be answered because he is not truly sorry. Even though Claudius offers the words of his guilt to “heaven” (line 103), he knows that “[w]ords without thoughts”(line 103), or praying for forgiveness, is pointless unless one is willing to repent or give up what one has gained from one’s crimes.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

**Activity 5: Quick Write**

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

**What is the impact of pairing Claudius’s confession with Hamlet’s “Now might I do it” soliloquy?**

Instruct students to practice using a formal style and objective tone 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**

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to continue to read their AIR texts through the lens of focus standard RL.11-12.4 or RI.11-12.4 and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

- Students follow along.

**Homework**

Continue to read your Accountable Independent Reading text through the lens of focus standard RL.11-12.4 or RI.11-12.4 and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.
# Model Character Tracking Tool

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<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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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:** *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Trait</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Claudius</td>
<td>Unrepentant</td>
<td>Claudius is not sorry for the “foul murder” (line 56) of his brother, and though he tries to pray for forgiveness, he knows it is pointless because “[w]ords without thoughts never to heaven go” (line 103).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamlet</td>
<td>Indecisive</td>
<td>Hamlet comes upon Claudius kneeling in what he assumes is prayer. He draws his sword to “do ‘t” (line 78), to kill Claudius. But he pauses and considers that if he kills Claudius while he is in the act of “purging ... his soul” (line 90), then he will likely send Claudius “[t]o heaven” (line 83). Once again, Hamlet hesitates and decides not to act. He will look for a “more horrid” time (line 93) when Claudius is sinning: “drunk asleep, or in his rage, / Or in th’ incestuous pleasure of his bed” (lines 94–95). Then Hamlet will kill him and send him to “hell” (line 100).</td>
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