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How To Teach Hamlet

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How To Teach Hamlet

An Honors Program Project Presented to
the Faculty of the Undergraduate
College of Education
James Madison University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of the Bachelor of Arts

By Rachel Allison Wolfe

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Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Secondary Education, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors Program.

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PUBLIC PRESENTATION

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The History

Since Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* in the early 1600s, the tragedy has been used to discuss some of the major themes prevalent in the Renaissance. These themes have continued to influence popular culture up into the early part of the 21st century. Over the years, the method of discussion has changed, but the themes, such as the impossibility of certainty, the complexity of decisions, and the permanence (or lack thereof) of death, have remained important topics of educated conversation. Unfortunately, years of teaching Shakespeare as literature, instead of as a drama, has led to glassy-eyed teenagers regurgitating the “fixed values” of Shakespeare’s writing, quite the opposite of what literature, specifically Shakespeare, is all about.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, when English as a subject began to appear as an essential part of Secondary education, the attitude towards teaching Shakespeare was heavily influenced by national pride in England (Olive, 2014). Shakespeare was the greatest writer of all time, plain and simple. His plays “contained timeless characters and portrayed universal values which define[d]...humanity” (Irish, 2014, p. 3). By the 1980s, respect for Shakespeare and his ability to capture universal themes remained, but the necessary understanding to truly appreciate his writing had all but disappeared. In 1985, Richard Adams stated in reference to the static teaching of Shakespeare that students “are conditioned to accept that such brushes with greatness, like some potent but ill-tasting medicine, are good for them” (Irish, 2014, p. 3). Thankfully, others like Adams argued for the use of dramatic teachings of plays in the hopes that it would motivate students in the classroom. As classrooms became more student-focused, educators began to place a bigger emphasis on enjoying literature, not just understanding it. Even the government began to

look at legislation in regards to the debate on how to teach literature and began to “promote...the use of drama to encourage imagination and empathy” in the classroom (Irish, 2014, p. 4). It was in the mid-1980s that Shakespeare began to fade out of secondary education. Experts “question[ed] the suitability of the study of Shakespeare for young teenagers,” even though they preserved the idea that Shakespeare was the greatest writer to date. Teachers began to argue that Shakespeare just was not for everyone because “the language [was] just too high a hurdle to attempt” and many of the plays were “full of a violence and hatred with which [teachers would] not particularly want to deal with thirteen-year-olds” (Irish, 2014, p. 5).

Outside of academia, however, Shakespeare continued to grow in popularity. Theatres disregarded the idea that Shakespeare’s plays had “fixed values and a fixed spectrum of interpretation” and instead treated Shakespeare’s writings as outlines for a final product, which is more along the lines of what Shakespeare himself intended his work to be (Irish, 2014, p. 4). In 1984, John F. Andrews, the Director of Academic Programs and former teacher, brought Shakespeare back to the English classroom by stating: “virtually everybody acknowledges the need to approach Shakespeare’s plays as dramatic rather than literary works. The only real question seems to be just how to put the new consensus into practice” (Irish, 2014, p. 5).

A potential solution came quickly in 1986 with Dr. Rex Gibson, an acclaimed educator and Shakespearean expert, and his Shakespeare in Schools project which argued that every student, regardless of their age, could appreciate Shakespeare (Olive, 2014, p. 6). Gibson’s main point was to have teachers “employ a variety of methods, at the heart of which is social collaborative, imaginative, [and] re-creative activities” when teaching

Shakespeare in order to “deepen and enhance students informed personal responses” to the literature” (Irish, 2014, p. 6). Gibson went on to publish school editions of Shakespeare’s plays via Cambridge University Press and a periodical, *Shakespeare and Schools*, both of which have become universal guides for the teaching of Shakespeare. Others, like the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), followed suit with how-to’s that incorporated more entertaining and less academic approaches to the text. These publications, though somewhat out of date in 2015, hold “gems of ideas for anyone teaching Shakespeare and capture a key period in the evolution of a now widespread pedagogy” (Olive, 2014, p. 6).

When Kenneth Baker was appointed as the new Secretary of State for Education in May of 1986, the government again considered passing legislation on the teaching of literature. Baker argued that individual teachers and schools should not be allowed to create their own curriculums and instead proposed a National Curriculum. He wanted to “specify...the range of the books children were expected to read and understand” to provide equal opportunity and create a baseline of education in America (Irish, 2014, p. 8). Baker was adamant that Shakespeare should be on the list, but wanted a more textual analysis of the writing. He argued that “greater understanding led to greater enjoyment” and “one really had to know the play” when taught through a textual lens (Irish, 2014, p. 8). Other Education politicians followed Baker’s lead and demanded that Shakespeare be taught in every classroom around the nation. This, as can be expected, did not sit well with some teachers who were uncomfortable with being forced to teach the writings of a man whose plays reflected his time period in their treatment of class, race, and women. Others still argued that denying student’s access to the man who was acknowledged as the greatest playwright centuries after his death was not acceptable. Those who wanted to

continue the teaching of Shakespeare in the classroom won this debate and continue to win current debates as can be seen when the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) proposed to remove older literary figures from the curriculum in 2001 and a large percentage of politicians, administrators, scholars, teachers, and parents fought back (Irish, 2014, p. 9).

Again politics disrupted these decisions in 1989 when the National Curriculum was first put into place. The requirement for Shakespeare was simply that “pupils should be introduced to...some of the works of Shakespeare” (Irish, 2014, p. 9). Shakespeare was the only author that was deemed essential; all other requirements simply demanded influential writers in various areas of study. However, with the 1988 Education Reform Act that inspired the emphasis on assessments, teaching Shakespeare became even more complicated. Teachers were daunted by the mandatory testing and avoided teaching Shakespeare for fear that they would not be able to do the work justice. Instead, to get around the requirement of introducing students to Shakespeare, teachers would show movie renditions of Shakespeare’s plays, use these complex texts for grammar lessons, or discuss small important aspects of Shakespeare’s writing, such as the “to be or not to be” speech from *Hamlet*. In 1993/4, this minimal use of Shakespeare in the classroom was stopped with the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) which required students to have read *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Caesar*, or *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* to complete the second paper of the exam. Unfortunately, the questions asked on the SATs required students to treat the texts as written documents, and thus themselves as readers, instead of viewing the plays as living performances and themselves as participants, viewers, or even directors. When educators discovered this, the majority of schools and teacher unions joined together

in a boycott of this portion of the test. This turned out positively for teachers being able to experience teaching Shakespeare without having to prepare students in ways to pass a test. In 1995 when Shakespeare made his way back on to the SATs, the questions were far more character based and creative than they had previously been (Irish, 2014, p. 12).

Progress towards teaching Shakespeare as drama instead of literature has continued well into the 21st century. In 2008, the required Shakespeare questions were eliminated from the SATs and the inclusion of historical context and alternative perspectives on texts was required by the new curriculum (Olive, 2014, p. 6). In the spring of 2012, the British Shakespeare Association started a periodical, *Teaching Shakespeare*, which provides an up-to-date look at Shakespeare in the classrooms, but continues to rely on the progress and insight that occurred during the latter half of the 20th century. This publication and publications like it provide accommodations considering the “advances in technology [that] offer far greater potential for working with Shakespeare in multimedia than they did two decades ago” (Olive, 2014, p. 6). *Teaching Shakespeare* still upholds Shakespeare’s status as a brilliant playwright, but also looks at his work through a critical lens that promotes using “diverse approaches to the plays” and opens up a forum to discuss the problems within his texts (Olive, 2014, p. 7). In addition, *Teaching Shakespeare* takes into consideration the influence, and criticisms, of Dr. Rex Gibson and prior educators: “*Teaching Shakespeare* aims to feature performance, creative writing, theory-driven, text- and context-based methods...to avoid criticisms...of didacticism, over-reliance on character-based (Bradleyian) analysis, and placing excessive demands on the time, physical spaces and skills available to teachers” (Olive, 2014, p. 7). Likewise, other resources for

teachers to discuss the teaching of Shakespeare have taken a similar stand on the plethora of creative methods to teach Shakespeare's plays.

The debate about Shakespeare in classrooms is still prevalent in 2015, in both England and the United States. With the recent introduction of the Common Core in 2010, the teaching of Shakespeare is liable to transform again. "While the Standards make references to some particular forms of content, including...Shakespeare" they also make sure to state that they cannot "enumerate all or even most of the content that students should learn" (CCS 6). Thus, while the Common Core requires "at least one play by Shakespeare," it also encourages the teaching of many other authors (CCS 38).

Teachers will continue to struggle with ways to integrate Shakespeare into their units and lessons in ways that will allow students to effectively learn from and relate to the texts. However, by approaching Shakespeare and his writings as malleable texts and approaching the unit and accompanying lesson plans as a way to learn about certain themes not certain texts, teaching Shakespeare in the classroom becomes a far more manageable topic to address.

Critic Analysis of Hamlet

Feminist

The article “A Feminist Reading of Shakespearean Tragedies: Frailty, Thy Name is Woman” by Ayub Jajja looks at the major tragedies (*Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Romeo and Juliet*) written by Shakespeare from a feminist lens. The article argues that while many of Shakespeare’s female characters display positive characteristics, Hamlet was still influenced by the ideologies of his time. Thus, women are portrayed through patriarchal values in all of Shakespeare’s plays which reinforces the patriarchy and patriarchal values of today.

This article mainly helped me in planning my lessons surrounding Ophelia (Lessons two and six). The in-depth analysis of the female characters that this article helped me create the background lesson on the way women were treated historically as well as argue for how women were portrayed in Shakespeare’s writing. I hope that this article will deepen my analysis of Ophelia in particular but also of the other women portrayed in *Hamlet*.

Psychoanalytic

In the article, “The Sanity of Hamlet,” Tenney Davis diagnoses Hamlet with being overly fond of logic. Published in *The Journal of Philosophy*, this article defines the symptoms that Hamlet exhibits in his potential madness. Davis argues that the reader can never know if Hamlet is truly mad or not, but the reader can make the argument that regardless of his sanity, Hamlet has chosen to deny the social compromise.

This article helped me in planning the lessons on sanity as well as the lessons concerning Hamlet (mainly Lessons one and three). The analysis Davis gives outlines arguments both for and against Hamlet's sanity. I hope that this article will be a good starting point for me to begin gathering examples of Hamlet's sanity (or insanity) to help spur discussion in the classroom.

Formalist

The article "The Dramatic Context and Meaning of Hamlet's 'To Be or Not To Be' Soliloquy" by Alex Newell argues that looking at this soliloquy as Hamlet contemplating suicide takes away from the play. Newell argues that this speech is Hamlet contemplating action versus inaction, not suicide, and encourages a more dramatic look at this scene in general. Newell proposes potential ways of acting this scene in particular out on a stage.

This article definitely helped in planning the fourth lesson of this unit. The alternative perspective to my own allowed me to prepare a more well rounded lesson and include a variety of theories in the meaning and intent of the "To Be or Not To Be" speech.

In the Classroom

I remember seeing Shakespeare for the first time in tenth grade as part of a grammar assignment. Every day, my English teacher would put a sentence from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on the board without any punctuation and a few spelling mistakes. Our job was to make the word scramble a complete sentence.

After we finished editing the last sentence towards the end of my the school year, my favorite teacher turned to our block class of 50ish fifteen-year-olds. "Can anyone guess who wrote this play?"

Silence.

"He's a very famous author."

Pens clicked rapidly and eyes found fascinating specks of dirt on the floor.

"Anyone? Buehler?"

The class smiled at their desks.

"William Shakespeare. He's still considered to be the greatest writer of all time."

We nodded our heads and the lesson moved on.

Those grammar lessons in 10th grade were the first and last mention of William Shakespeare I heard in the classroom until coming to James Madison University as an English major.

I procrastinated long and hard on my Shakespeare requirement. If my High School teacher thought it was too hard for her to conquer, what could I hope to accomplish? What I had learned all those years prior was fear. I was petrified at the thought of reading Shakespeare. I was terrified that taking a course on Shakespeare would challenge my dream of being an English teacher. I waited until my sixth semester at JMU before taking "Teaching Shakespeare."

On the first day of class, my professor had us up on our feet, acting out a scene not one of us had read before. Throughout the semester, we talked about modern adaptations of Shakespeare's plays, what living in the 1600s was like, and how to pull themes that mattered to middle and high school students out of all sorts of different places. The most important part of this class, though, was the encouragement we received to be truly critical of Shakespeare's work: "Just because he was the greatest doesn't mean he was perfect." This view of Shakespeare, as someone to be studied not revered, changed my dream of being an English teacher, but not the way I thought it might.

The physical movement and history paired with modern understandings of every play we discussed made the text reachable and Shakespeare a little bit less terrifying. Thanks to this class, my idea of how to teach English transformed. It is especially important with plays, but all types of literature can and should be taught through more than a lecture. Incorporating kinesthetic, visual, and audio learning styles as well as providing a means for students to interact with and relate to a text can make or break someone's experience with literature, especially with an author as renowned as William Shakespeare.

Thus, I worked to create this unit plan. With lessons intended to last approximately 90 minutes, but that can easily be divided into multiple lessons, and activities geared towards utilizing drama, discussions, and active reading/writing, I hope to make Shakespeare reachable for 10th grade students. This unit will be scaffolded to meet the needs of a range of students with varying strengths and needs, including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with exceptionalities. All in all, students will hopefully leave this unit feeling comfortable with Shakespeare, the idea of characterization, and compare and contrast essays.

Unit Plan (Understanding by Design)

Overview

Unit Topic – *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare

Grade Level – 10th grade

Concept(s) – Characterization and Compare/Contrast

Theme(s) – Reality, Action/Inaction/Reaction, and Perspective

Brief Summary – This eight-day unit will be a discussion of *Hamlet* with a focus on the different variations of stories taught near the end of the year. Previously, students will have covered novels, novellas, short stories, and poetry with a focus on characterization which will prepare students to view the differences in literary devices in the different literary forms. For this unit, students will first watch a version of *Hamlet* (or read the play) and then, through dramatic dialogue, discuss the concept of reality, its relationship to madness, and the consequences of actions. Students will then explore modern takes on *Hamlet*, namely by watching *The Lion King*, in order to better look at the play. Students will learn how to compare and contrast literature from different time periods and work together to produce an analytical compare and contrast essay to showcase the everlasting nature of Shakespeare’s themes. Once this unit has come to a close, students will be prepared to continue comparing and contrasting types of literature from various time periods or how literary devices are used across the genres.

Transfer Objectives

Understandings – *Students will understand that...*

1. *Actions* have consequences.
2. Language is power to communicate one’s *perspective*.
3. People understand and interpret *reality* differently.
4. Society and culture (the *reality* of a group of people) impacts literature and vice versa.
5. Literary themes, such as *Action/Inaction/Reaction*, play a role in media other than “ancient literature” and as such, are a reflection and commentary on society.

Essential Questions

1. Does intent matter?

2. What kind of language is powerful enough to convey my perspective?
3. Why might my perspective change?
4. What makes something real?
5. How do people interpret their reality?
6. Should humans be ruled by emotion or reason?
7. Why do people perceive situations differently from other people?
8. Is there a right answer when analyzing literature?
9. Is there a wrong answer when analyzing literature?
10. How does literature impact culture?
11. How does culture impact literature?
12. How does the portrayal of similar stories impact our understanding of a text?

Learning Goals – SOLs

Communication: Speaking, Listening, Media Literacy

10.1

- c) Include all group members in oral presentation.
- f) Collaborate with others to exchange ideas, develop new understandings, make decisions, and solve problems.
- h) Evaluate one's own role in preparation and delivery of oral reports.
- k) Evaluate effectiveness of group process in preparation and delivery of oral reports.

Reading

10.3 a) Use structural analysis of roots, affixes, synonyms, antonyms, and cognates to understand complex words.

10.4

- c) Explain similarities and differences of techniques and literary forms represented in the literature of different cultures and eras.
- d) Analyze the cultural or social function of literature.
- e) Identify universal themes prevalent in the literature of different cultures.

- h) Evaluate how an author’s specific word choices, syntax, tone, and voice shape the intended meaning of the text, achieve specific effects and support the author’s purpose.
- i) Compare and contrast literature from different cultures and eras.
- k) Compare and contrast how rhyme, rhythm, sound, imagery, style, form, and other literary devices convey a message and elicit a reader’s emotions.

Writing

10.6

- e) Organize ideas into a logical sequence using transitions.
- f) Revise writing for clarity of content, accuracy, and depth of information.

Specific Learning Objectives

Knowledge Goals – Students will know...

1. The basic plot and characters of *Hamlet*.
2. The basic plot and characters of *The Lion King*.
3. Key points of history surrounding *Hamlet*.
4. The status of women in the 1600s.
5. Key points of Shakespeare’s life.
6. The definition(s) of literary functions (such as *irony, tone, characterization, word choice, imagery, etc.*).
7. The definition of reality.
8. The definition of sanity.
9. The definition of perspective.
10. The definition of dramatic dialogue.
11. The definition of soliloquy.

Skill Goals – Students will be able to...

1. **Remember:** Identify the characters from *Hamlet*.
2. **Remember:** Identify the characters from *The Lion King*.
3. **Understand:** Summarize the plot of *Hamlet*.
4. **Understand:** Summarize the plot of *The Lion King*.
5. **Apply:** “Translate” Shakespearean English into “more modern” English.
6. **Analyze:** Compare and Contrast adaptations of *Hamlet*.

7. **Create:** Make statements that communicate agreement or tactful disagreement with others' ideas.
8. **Create:** Hypothesize why *Hamlet* and *The Lion King* have similarities.

Lesson Plans

Day 1: (Act 1)

Standards		UKDs	
10.4 h) Evaluate how an author’s specific word choices, syntax, tone, and voice shape the intended meaning of the text, achieve specific effects and support the author’s purpose.		<i>Understand:</i> Actions have consequences; People understand and interpret reality differently. <i>Know:</i> The basic plot and characters of <i>Hamlet</i> ; key points of the history surrounding the play; the definition(s) of literary functions (specifically foil, syntax, tone, and voice). <i>Do: Remember</i> Identify the characters from Hamlet	
Content/Topic	The Text	Lesson Strategy	Assessment
Characterization, Foil(s), Syntax, Tone, Voice	<i>Hamlet</i> Act I	Sticky-notes (as a means of taking class notes)	“Practice Makes Perfect” exit card

Steps in the Lesson

Teacher Does	Students Do	Estimated Time
Brief discussion of the history of <i>Hamlet</i> via PowerPoint slides (with fun pictures) , focusing on the immediate history in England that the play reflects upon.	Take notes in notebook.	10-12 minutes
Show Act I Scene 1 of <i>Hamlet</i> , emphasizing characterization.	Take notes in notebook.	6 minutes
Repeat these past two steps with Act 1 Scene 2 (13.5 minutes), Act 1 Scene 3 (7.5 minutes), Act 1 Scene 4-5 (15 minutes)	Take notes and then make sticky notes as group.	49 minutes
Have groups post the sticky notes up on the board in groupings of similar characteristics and take note of which character provided these adjectives – moving one group at a time and allowing the group to share their rationale behind the adjectives.	Post sticky-notes on board and share group work.	20 minutes
Facilitate a class discussion about Act 1 of the play, especially concerning the characteristics of Hamlet and how they	Participate in class discussion.	10-15 minutes

<p>relate to the larger play. <i>Based on the board, what kind of a person do you think Hamlet is? Do you think intent matters? Should humans be ruled by emotion or reason? How do you think Hamlet's personality will impact his relationships with the other characters? How do their personalities differ or compare to Hamlet? What do you think these different personalities will cause?</i></p>		
<p>Create a visual representation (on the board) of Hamlet in comparison to other characters, especially as they relate to him as a <i>foil</i> (define as key word), for this section of the class. Be sure to compare Laertes and Hamlet's family life (including covering the incest-like undertones of Polonius and Laertes speeches to Ophelia in comparison to Claudius and Gertrude) and broaden the discussion to the import of family on human life. <i>Has family life changed since the early 1600s? How or how not? How does familial responsibility impact humans?</i></p>	Participate in class discussion.	10-15 minutes
<p>Give students a note card and ask them to identify at least two characteristics of Gertrude as given by either Hamlet or the ghost during Act I.</p>	Complete and turn in exit card.	5-10 minutes

Differentiation

Initial Plans for Adjusting Instruction/Materials to Meet Diverse Needs of Students	
Need (Discuss at least 2)	Plans for Adjustment to instruction and/or materials
English Language Learners	Offering the option to utilize the video, Shakespeare's version of the play, or any other summary/No Fear Shakespeare version of the play to assist in analysis of Hamlet.
Students who struggle in the area of _____ (Reading, writing, thinking)	Showing a video version of the play versus requiring students to read the play.

Students who are advanced in the area of _____ (Reading , writing, thinking)	Have the option of reading Shakespeare's original work in their analysis of Hamlet.
Other (as revealed in formative assessment):	

Day 2: (Act II Scene i)

Standards		UKDS	
10.4 d) Analyze the cultural or social function of literature. 10.6 e) Organize ideas into a logical sequence using transitions.		<i>Understand:</i> Society and culture (the <i>reality</i> of a group of people) impacts literature and vice versa. <i>Know:</i> The basic plot and characters of <i>Hamlet</i> ; key points of the history surrounding the play; The status of women in the 1600s. <i>Do: Apply</i> “Translate” Shakespearean English into “more modern” English.	
Content/Topic	The Text	Lesson Summary	Assessment
Characterization	<i>Hamlet</i> Act II Scene i	Interview a Character	Creative Diary Entry

Steps in the Lesson

Teacher Does	Students Do	Estimated Time
Show <i>Hamlet</i> Act II Scene I (utilize time to prep “Hamlet”)	Take notes in notebook.	6 minutes
Ask another teacher, faculty member, or a student who appears to truly understand the material to dress up as Hamlet and have the class pretend to interview Hamlet. The students are reporters who are curious about Ophelia’s accusation that Hamlet accosted her. Tell students they are trying to discover why Hamlet acted the way he did in the beginning of Act II. <i>Was he trying to communicate a secret message to Ophelia? Does he still love her? Where does Ophelia fit into his plans? How does he feel about Ophelia?</i>	Participate in an interview of Hamlet in reference to his relationship with Ophelia with their questions (which they will have prepared for homework the night before).	15-20 minutes
Say “goodbye” to Hamlet and prep for Think-Pair-Share. Ask students to individually write down their thoughts about Hamlet and Ophelia’s relationship (based on the “interview” and the text – again, phone and computer use encouraged to review clip/scene), then pair up and discuss their relationship, and finally, participate in a full-class discussion about their relationship. <i>How</i>	Participate in T-P-S and discussion.	20-25 minutes

<p><i>does Hamlet feel about Ophelia? Ophelia about Hamlet? What is keeping Hamlet from being with Ophelia? What is keeping Ophelia from Hamlet? What kind of language does Hamlet use to convey his perspective? Why do people perceive situations differently from other people? Discuss Ophelia’s social status and how Polonius’s previous demand that Ophelia stay away from Hamlet impacted their relationship.</i></p>		
<p>Brief lecture (with PowerPoint) on women’s social standing while Shakespeare was writing – what jobs could they have, what did marriage look like for rich vs. poor women, etc.</p>	Take notes in notebook	15 minutes
<p>Instruct students to participate in a diary entry: Now that you know the social pressures Ophelia is facing, write from her perspective. In her diary, Ophelia might be thinking about the love letters Hamlet sent her, about her father’s influence on her relationship with Hamlet, about her brother’s absence, etc. What kind of language is powerful enough to convey my perspective?</p>	Participate in free-write of a diary entry.	15 minutes

Differentiation

Initial Plans for Adjusting Instruction/Materials to Meet Diverse Needs of Students	
Need (Discuss at least 2)	Plans for Adjustment to instruction and/or materials
English Language Learners	
Students who struggle in the area of _____ (Reading, writing , thinking)	If students are stuck with the creative writing portion, give them a “Who, What, When, Where, Why” chart to spur their creative writing.
Students who are advanced in the area of _____ (Reading, writing, thinking)	

Other (as revealed in formative assessment):	Based on what students convey via this diary entry (on their understanding of Ophelia as a character), remodeling the in-depth lesson on Ophelia later in this unit can happen.
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Day 3: (Act II Scene ii)

Standards		UKDS	
10.1 h) Evaluate one's own role in preparation and delivery of oral reports. k) Evaluate effectiveness of group process in preparation and delivery of oral reports.		<i>Understand:</i> People understand and interpret <i>reality</i> differently. <i>Know:</i> The basic plot and characters of <i>Hamlet</i> ; the definition of reality; the definition of sanity. <i>Do: Create</i> Make statements that communicate agreement or tactful disagreement with others' ideas.	
Content/Topic	The Text	Lesson Summary	Assessment
Characterization	<i>Hamlet</i> Act II Scene ii	Debate	"Change My Opinion" Exit Card; participation throughout debate

Steps in the Lesson

Teacher Does	Students Do	Estimated Time
Show <i>Hamlet</i> Act II Scene ii, emphasis on sanity.	Take notes in notebook.	9-10 minutes
Announce yourself as the judge residing over this debate (dress up). Ask students to sit on one side of the classroom if they believe that Hamlet is pretending to be insane and on the other side of the classroom if they believe Hamlet is actually insane. If there are any students who are undecided, place them with the side that is less populated (or, if even on both sides, you can make them a part of the jury)	Choose side to sit on.	2 minutes
Give students 20 minutes to gather evidence and choose who will give the initial argument, the rebuttal, and the conclusion (must be 3 different students). Another student will be the note-taker, this person will document the facts the presenters need in an organized manner. Another student will be the fighter – this person will	Decide role of students in group.	20 minutes (exact)

play rock-paper-scissors right before the debate begins to determine who goes first (winner decides). Everyone else is a fact-checker/finder.		
Rock-paper-scissors to decide side that will present first.	“Fighter” participates.	2 minutes
Initial remarks (from both sides).	Initial arguers speak.	16-20 minutes
Discussion/Preparation for rebuttal.	Research, find evidence, and create rebuttal.	5 minutes (exact)
Rebuttals.	Rebuttal speaker presents argument.	10 minutes (exact)
Discussion/Preparation for Concluding Arguments	Research, find evidence, and create rebuttal.	5 minutes (exact)
Concluding arguments.	Concluding Arguers speak.	10 minutes (exact)
Give students a worksheet to evaluate their performance, their group’s performance, and their opposition’s performance.	Evaluate themselves, their group members, and their class members.	3-5 minutes
Ask them to identify their position before and after the debate and give 2-3 reasons as to why or why not it changed. (Hand out notecards) <i>Why might my perspective change?</i>	Fill out “Change Over Time” Exit Card	5 minutes

Differentiation

Initial Plans for Adjusting Instruction/Materials to Meet Diverse Needs of Students	
Need (Discuss at least 2)	Plans for Adjustment to instruction and/or materials
English Language Learners	Grouping will allow students who struggle to analyze to see how other students read the text.
Students who struggle in the area of _____ (Reading, writing, thinking)	Grouping will allow students who struggle to analyze to see how other students read the text.
Students who are advanced in the area of _____ (Reading, writing, thinking)	
Other (as revealed in formative assessment):	

Day 4: (Act III Scene i)

Standards		UKDS	
10.4 h) Evaluate how an author’s specific word choices, syntax, tone, and voice shape the intended meaning of the text, achieve specific effects and support the author’s purpose. i) Compare and contrast literature from different cultures and eras. k) Compare and contrast how rhyme, rhythm, sound, imagery, style, form, and other literary devices convey a message and elicit a reader’s emotions.		<i>Understand:</i> Language is power to communicate one’s <i>perspective</i> ; people understand and interpret <i>reality</i> differently; Society and culture (the <i>reality</i> of a group of people) impacts literature and vice versa; literary themes, such as <i>Action/Inaction/Reaction</i> , play a role in mediums other than “ancient literature” and as such, are a reflection and commentary on society. <i>Know:</i> The basic plot and characters of <i>Hamlet</i> ; the definition of perspective; the definition of dramatic dialogue; the definition of soliloquy. <i>Do:</i> Analyze Compare and Contrast adaptations of <i>Hamlet</i> .	
Content/Topic	The Text	Lesson Summary	Assessment
Compare and Contrast, Perspective	<i>Hamlet</i> Act III Scene I; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCJ4hKJvgJw	Compare and Contrast Graphic Organizer	3-2-1 Exit Card

Steps in the Lesson

Teacher Does	Students Do	Estimated Time
Free-write: Ask students to write about a time when they felt that what they had said was misinterpreted. What went wrong? What happened because someone misunderstood them? Allow students to share after 8 minutes of writing. How	Participate in a free-write.	15 minutes

<i>do people interpret their reality?</i>		
Show Act III Scene i.	Take notes in notebook.	2 minutes
Explain how Hamlet’s “to be or not to be” speech has multiple readings and interpretations. <i>Is there a right answer when analyzing literature? Is there a wrong answer when analyzing literature?</i>		1-2 minutes
Hand out a graphic organizer that has space for notes on the different “to be or not to be” speeches, including specifics on setting, actor, mood, delivery, attitude, symbolism, etc.		1-2 minutes
Explain what a soliloquy and other literary devices necessary are and have students fill out the definition on their graphic organizer.	Fill out graphic organizer.	5-10 minutes
Watch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCJ4hKJvgJw , taking time to pause between different versions of the clip and let students write down answers to the questions on their graphic organizers. <i>Why did the director make those decisions? What was his purpose? What did this speech mean? Did it help him come to a conclusion/make a decision? What makes this portrayal unique?</i>	Fill out graphic organizer.	20 minutes
Do a think-pair-share where students will now pair up and discuss what they liked and did not like about each scene and then broaden the discussion to the whole class. <i>How does culture impact literature?</i>	T-P-S	15-20 minutes
Conduct a poll (you can use student’s cell phones and a website that will conduct the poll for you – i.e. https://www.classpacer.com/) to figure out which two scenes were the most popular.	Participate in the class polling.	2 minutes
3-2-1 exit card (notecard): ask students to jot down 3 reasons that argue their perspective on which of the top two versions of Hamlet’s soliloquy is the best, 2 reasons that would counter their opinion, and 1 question that they have about the play so far.	Complete and turn in 3-2-1 notecards.	10 minutes

Differentiation

Initial Plans for Adjusting Instruction/Materials to Meet Diverse Needs of Students	
Need (Discuss at least 2)	Plans for Adjustment to instruction and/or materials

English Language Learners	
Students who struggle in the area of _____ (Reading, writing, thinking)	
Students who are advanced in the area of _____ (Reading, writing , thinking)	Encourage students who excel at writing to document their free-write in play format.
Other (as revealed in formative assessment):	Begin the following class answering questions and revealed during exit card and modify future lessons to address questions if possible.

Day 5: (Act III Scene ii-iv)

Standards		UKDS	
10.1 f) Collaborate with others to exchange ideas, develop new understandings, make decisions, and solve problems.		<i>Understand:</i> Language is power to communicate one's <i>perspective</i> . <i>Know:</i> The basic plot and characters of <i>Hamlet</i> . <i>Do: Remember</i> Identify the characters from <i>Hamlet</i> ; <i>Apply</i> "Translate" Shakespearean English into "more modern" English.	
Content/Topic	The Text	Lesson Summary	Assessment
Characterization	<i>Hamlet</i> Act III Scene ii-iv	Reciprocal Teaching	Journal Entry, Creative Exit Card

Steps in the Lesson

Teacher Does	Students Do	Estimated Time
Divide students into groups of six. Have students choose which character they are going to look at in-depth (Hamlet, Claudius, Gertrude, Horatio, Polonius, or Ophelia).	Move to their groups and decide which student will focus on which character.	1-2 minutes
Show <i>Hamlet</i> Act III Scene ii pt. 1	Jot down adjectives that describe their character and the name of the character that provided them with this understanding of their character alongside the adjective.	10 minutes
Have students meet in focus groups – groups that are all “researching” the same character and discuss their adjectives. Encourage students to look over texts/videos if needed.	Discuss in groups.	2-4 minutes
Repeat with Act III Scene ii pt. 2 (9 minutes), Act III Scene iii (7.5 minutes), Act III Scene iv pt. 1 (9 minutes), and Act III Scene iv pt. 2 (3.5 minutes)	Take notes during clips and discuss in groups.	49 minutes
Have students reflect on their conversation in a journal entry. <i>What did they learn about their character? What kind of person do they think their character is? What is their relationship with the other characters?</i>	Write in their journal.	10 minutes
Facilitate a class discussion about Act 3	Participate in a class discussion.	10-15

of the play. <i>How do the different characters view the same events? The same people? What does it mean that different people view things differently?</i>		minutes
On their exit card (notecard), ask students to outline their favorite character or the character they associate the most with. <i>What draws them to this character? Why is that intriguing?</i>	Fill out their exit card.	5 minutes

Differentiation

Initial Plans for Adjusting Instruction/Materials to Meet Diverse Needs of Students	
Need (Discuss at least 2)	Plans for Adjustment to instruction and/or materials
English Language Learners	
Students who struggle in the area of _____ (Reading, writing, thinking)	Group work and the practice during lesson 1 will enhance these students' abilities here.
Students who are advanced in the area of _____ (Reading, writing , thinking)	Encourage students who excel at writing to model their diary entry after a diary entry previously read in class.
Other (as revealed in formative assessment):	

Day 6: (Act IV)

Standards		UKDS	
10.1 c) Include all group members in oral presentation. d) Choose vocabulary, language, and tone appropriate to the topic, audience, and purpose.		<i>Understand:</i> Language is power to communicate one's <i>perspective</i> . <i>Know:</i> The basic plot and characters of <i>Hamlet</i> ; the definition of sanity. <i>Do: Understand</i> Summarize the plot of <i>Hamlet</i> ; Apply "Translate" Shakespearean English into "more modern" English.	
Content/Topic	The Text	Lesson Summary	Assessment
Characterization	<i>Hamlet</i> Act IV	Social Media Profile	Group Presentations

Steps in the Lesson

Teacher Does	Students Do	Estimated Time
Show images of Ophelia on a PowerPoint – <i>Ophelia</i> by Henrietta Ray and <i>Ophelia</i> by John Everett Millais – and ask students to decide which image better encompasses their understanding of Ophelia.	Look at the two photos and analyze.	3 minutes
Show <i>Hamlet</i> Act IV.	Take notes specifically on Ophelia	20 minutes
Divide students into groups (based on formative assessments given so far so that the advanced students are in one group and students that require more teacher-led instruction are in another group). Hand out an Assignment Requirements worksheet that outlines everything that students will be doing in class (in their groups, students will create a social media site for Ophelia and document her descent into madness via images, posts, etc).	Move into their groups.	2 minutes
Groups will work for the rest of the class to create Ophelia's social media page (all pictures, posts, etc. must point to specific lines or passages in the text that helped students create each post). Groups that require more teacher-led assistance will be helped	Work in groups to create a social media page for Ophelia.	20-30 minutes

by the teacher while more advanced students may be checked on less.		
Groups will present their finalized social media pages for Ophelia. Each student in the group must present a minimum of one of the posts.	Present their group work.	4 minutes/group

Differentiation

Initial Plans for Adjusting Instruction/Materials to Meet Diverse Needs of Students	
Need (Discuss at least 2)	Plans for Adjustment to instruction and/or materials
English Language Learners	Will have more teacher led instruction to help them analyze characters in plays.
Students who struggle in the area of _____ (Reading, writing, thinking)	Will have more teacher led instruction to help them analyze characters in plays.
Students who are advanced in the area of _____ (Reading, writing, thinking)	Will have less teacher led instruction and thus, more room to be creative and analyze the literature on their own.
Other (as revealed in formative assessment):	

Day 7: (Act V)

Standards		UKDS	
10.1 c) Include all group members in oral presentation. f) Collaborate with others to exchange ideas, develop new understandings, make decisions, and solve problems. 10.3 a) Use structural analysis of roots, affixes, synonyms, antonyms, and cognates to understand complex words.		<i>Understand:</i> Society and culture (the <i>reality</i> of a group of people) impacts literature and vice versa. <i>Know:</i> The basic plot and characters of <i>Hamlet</i> ; key points of Shakespeare’s life. <i>Do: Understand</i> Summarize the plot of <i>Hamlet</i> ; Apply “Translate” Shakespearean English into “more modern” English.	
Content/Topic	The Text	Lesson Summary	Assessment
Summary, Theme, Compare and Contrast	Http://www.britaininprint.net/shakespeare/study_tools/new_words_hamlet.html ; HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=H2Jzkop04P4&spfreload=1 ; <i>Hamlet</i> Act V	Act It Out, Team-Teach	Skits, 3-2-1 Exit Card

Steps in the Lesson

Teacher Does	Students Do	Estimated Time
Watch <i>Hamlet</i> Act v, pausing between the two scenes to debrief. (Scene 1 12 minutes, Scene 2 15 minutes)	Take notes in journal	29 minutes
HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=H2Jzkop04P4&spfreload=1 (1:19-2:10 = 30 second hamlet; -2:41 = 10 second hamlet)	Take notes in journal	2 minutes
Divide students into groups randomly and ask students to create their own 30-second <i>Hamlet</i> . Students must use at least one line directly from the play, but can get creative with others. Bring in potential props for them to utilize.	Write and practice their own skits.	10 minutes
Have groups present their 30-second plays.	Watch and observe classmates.	7-10 minutes
Have a full-class discussion about these 30-second plays. <i>What do they capture? What are the major themes of the play then? Is there a right/wrong answer when analyzing or interpreting literature?</i>	Participate in a full class discussion	5 minutes
Hand out copies of <i>New Words in Hamlet?</i> and ask students to pair up for a “team-teach.” (One student is the teacher and one student is the student. The teacher asks questions, here are examples that can be on the board: <i>What about this paragraph</i>	Read and take notes on the discussion	10-15 minutes

<i>surprised you? Can you think of a word that you remember from the play that you think Shakespeare made up? And the student answers. Each student gets to be the teacher and the student by swapping every paragraph)</i>		
Ask students to pair up and share what they noticed about the article.	Pair up and discuss.	3 minutes
Ask the entire class what they noticed about the article.	Participate in a full class discussion	7 minutes
Lecture on how Shakespeare truly impacted history and his immediate culture and how he continues to impact culture today. Ask students if they can think of anything that tells a similar story to <i>Hamlet</i> . Write examples on the board and discuss why students think these similarities might be. (PowerPoint)	Takes notes in journal and actively participate in lecture/discussion	10-15 minutes
3-2-1 exit card: 3 ways in which Shakespeare impacted history, 2 ways in which history impacted Shakespeare, and 1 way in which <i>Hamlet</i> is still confusing to you.	Complete Exit Card	5 minutes
Assign Homework of watching <i>The Lion King</i> (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joh3iR_l82o)	Complete as homework	1 minute

Differentiation

Initial Plans for Adjusting Instruction/Materials to Meet Diverse Needs of Students	
Need (Discuss at least 2)	Plans for Adjustment to instruction and/or materials
English Language Learners	The acting out of the plays will hopefully convey the major aspects of <i>Hamlet</i> .
Students who struggle in the area of _____ (Reading, writing, thinking)	The team-teaching will help students think critically about the text as well as allow them to talk through their ideas about the text with another student.
Students who are advanced in the area of _____ (Reading, writing, thinking)	
Other (as revealed in formative assessment):	Based on the exit card, discussion for the final lesson can be modified to cover any lingering confusions.

Day 8: (*Hamlet* and *The Lion King*)

Standards		UKDS	
10.4 c) Explain similarities and differences of techniques and literary forms represented in the literature of different cultures and eras. d) Analyze the cultural or social function of literature. e) Identify universal themes prevalent in the literature of different cultures. i) Compare and contrast literature from different cultures and eras. l) Compare and contrast character development in a play to characterization in other literary forms. 10.6 f) Revise writing for clarity of content, accuracy, and depth of information.		<i>Understand:</i> Society and culture (the <i>reality</i> of a group of people) impacts literature and vice versa; literary themes, such as <i>Action/Inaction/Reaction</i> , play a role in mediums other than “ancient literature” and as such, are a reflection and commentary on society. <i>Know:</i> The basic plot and characters of <i>Hamlet</i> ; the basic plot and characters of <i>The Lion King</i> ; the definition(s) of literary functions (such as <i>irony, tone, characterization, word choice, imagery</i> , etc.) <i>Do:</i> Remember Identify the characters from <i>Hamlet</i> ; Remember Identify the characters from <i>The Lion King</i> ; Understand Summarize the plot of <i>Hamlet</i> ; Understand Summarize the plot of <i>The Lion King</i> ; Analyze Compare and Contrast adaptations of <i>Hamlet</i> ; Create Hypothesize why <i>Hamlet</i> and <i>The Lion King</i> have similarities.	
Content/Topic	The Text	Lesson Summary	Assessment
Compare and Contrast, Theme	<i>Hamlet</i> and <i>The Lion King</i>	ABC Charts; Outlining	ABC Chart

Steps in the Lesson

Teacher Does	Students Do	Estimated Time
Show https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYheFyrahng	Watch and brainstorm similarities and differences between <i>Hamlet</i> and <i>The Lion King</i>	5 minutes
Hand out ABC Charts , model one/two comparisons, and then have students work in pairs/small groups to complete.	Complete ABC Charts	7-10 minutes
Lead a group discussion of the ABC Charts to allow students to share some of their compare/contrasts with the class to potentially inspire other students.	Share adjectives that students especially liked and take notes of adjectives that other students share	5-8 minutes
Ask students: <i>Why do you think Disney decided to</i>	Participate in discussion.	7-10

<i>reuse Shakespeare's play? What does that say about the play? How does the portrayal of similar stories impact our understanding of a text? What makes a text relevant? How does culture impact literature? How does literature impact culture?</i> T-P-S.		minutes
Hand out Final Paper Assignment Rubric (Students will be constructing an argument about the similarities and differences between <i>Hamlet</i> and <i>the Lion King</i>) and give students time to work on an outline.	Create an outline for their compare/contrast paper	30 minutes
Have students trade papers and, in another color pen, have students edit the outline in front of them (write their name in the color on top). The edits must include at least two grows and two glows.	Edit the paper in front of them.	5 minutes
Repeat previous step so students have two students edit their outlines.	Edit the second paper of a classmate.	5 minutes
Finish class with time to ask questions of the people who edited their outlines or time to continue working on their drafts (due first thing next class)	Continue editing own draft	5 minutes

Differentiation

Initial Plans for Adjusting Instruction/Materials to Meet Diverse Needs of Students	
Need (Discuss at least 2)	Plans for Adjustment to instruction and/or materials
English Language Learners	ABC Charts will help prepare students with a plethora of examples to get their papers started. In addition, outlining in class will allow for any needed instruction/intervention to happen easily during the beginnings of the writing process.
Students who struggle in the area of _____ (Reading, writing , thinking)	ABC Charts will help prepare students with a plethora of examples to get their papers started. In addition, outlining in class will allow for any needed instruction/intervention to happen easily during the beginnings of the writing process.
Students who are advanced in the area of _____ (Reading, writing , thinking)	Will expand their writing abilities more by being able to edit others papers.
Other (as revealed in formative assessment):	

Instructional Materials and Resources

Hamlet directed by Gregory Doran (Patrick Stewart and David Tennant BBC version) -

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/PLAYLIST?LIST=PL8653490E2C680C5C](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8653490E2C680C5C)

PowerPoint – Shakespeare: a History

PowerPoint – Women in the 1600s/Society’s impact on Shakespeare

“To Be or Not To Be” clips - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCJ4hKJvgJw>

Graphic Organizer – key vocab and blocks for setting, actor, mood, delivery, attitude, symbolism, etc. for the above clip

PowerPoint – Ophelia in Art

Assignment Requirements worksheet

New Words in Hamlet? by Karen Kay –

http://www.britaininprint.net/shakespeare/study_tools/new_words_hamlet.html

Hamlet by the Reduced Shakespeare Company (4 parts in order) -

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=BVPDWCCHKXM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVPDWCCHKXM);

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=HOM8BHQTSEU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HOM8BHQTSEU) (one joke in question at 7:02);

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=1OFKJ6UFV60](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1OFKJ6UFV60);

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=H2JZKOP04P4&SPFRELOAD=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2JZKOP04P4&SPFRELOAD=1) (1:19-2:10 = 30 second hamlet; -2:41 = 10 second hamlet)

PowerPoint - Shakespeare’s impact on society

The Lion King – [Https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joh3ir_182o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=joh3ir_182o)

ABC Chart

Comparison of *Hamlet* and *the Lion King* [Https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyhefyrahng](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fyhefyrahng)

Final Paper Assignment Rubric

John Green on *Hamlet* –

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=MY14MZA-EQ8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MY14MZA-EQ8);

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=NDCOHLKUUF5](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NDCOHLKUUF5)

Journal of Progress

May 2014 – August 2014: Research the history of Shakespeare in schools

September 2014: Draft write-up of the history of Shakespeare in schools

October 2014: Draft Unit plan

November 2014: Draft literary analysis and personal narrative piece

December 2014: Draft Lesson plans 1-4

January 2015: Draft Lesson plans 5-8

February 2015: Finalize written portion, Unit plan, and Lesson plans

March 2015: Share thesis with readers

April 2015: Make final edits

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