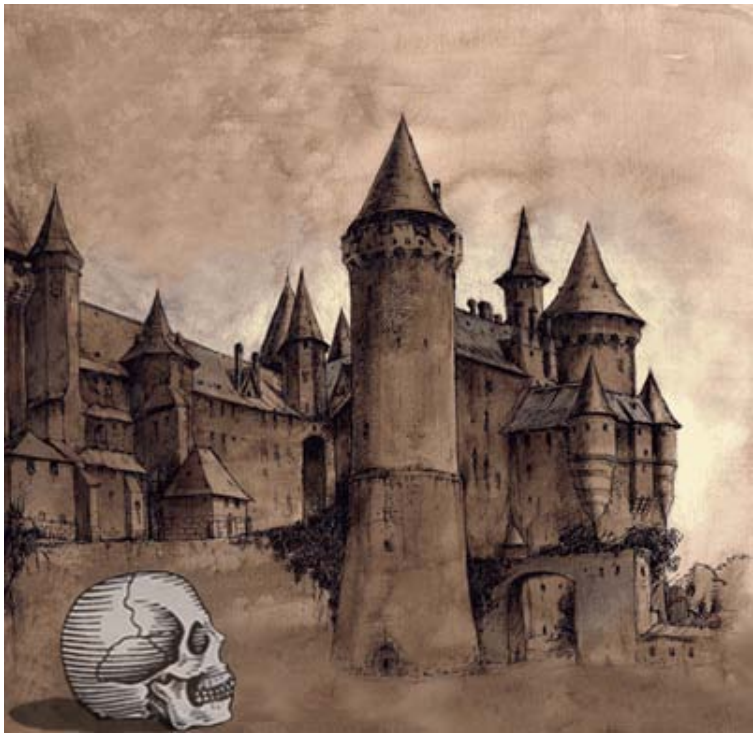
Shakespeare on Tour

Teacher's Handbook and Curriculum

hamlet



By Rebecca J. Ennals
Director of Education,
San Francisco Shakespeare Festival

P.O. Box 460937, San Francisco, CA 94146
800-978-PLAY • 415-558-0888 • www.sfshakes.org

Shakespeare on Tour

Teacher's Handbook and Curriculum

Hamlet

Thanks to:
Kristin Clippard, Jackie Hasa, John Western, Toby Leavitt, STAA, and to Kevin Coleman of Shakespeare & Co., for inspiration and "feeding in."

table of contents

preface

I'm now my sixth year as director of Shakespeare on Tour and my fifth year writing curriculum specifically for our tour audiences. Thanks to your feedback, I know that some teachers have time for a full three-week intensive with Shakespeare, but many, particularly those in the public schools, only have time for a day or two. This year, I've added the "If you only have a day" lesson, featuring our popular synopsis game, which I've used with ages 7 and up at Shakespeare Camps, in library lectures, at board meetings, and even with a mixed audience of a few hundred people at Free Shakespeare in the Park.

Hamlet is generally studied in high school (the "To be or not to be" speech is part of the California State Educational Standards for Language Arts for grades 11-12). This curriculum is intended for high school students, although you'll still find suggested study questions and ideas for younger students. The synopsis game can be used with all ages.

You'll also find a list of CSE standards covered at the beginning of every lesson. I've tried to list both Performing Arts and Language Arts standards. Of course, no three-week curriculum can cover all the CSE standards, but reading and listening to Shakespeare is one of the best ways I can think of to cover a large number of them!

A note about "grade-level appropriate text": We at the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival have been using Shakespeare's actual text with grades 2 and up for nearly twenty years in our summer camp and after-school programs. The key is not to expect them to read the whole play, but give them short passages to read. The rest they will understand when they see it performed. Just as young children learn foreign languages more adeptly than adults, I find that early exposure to Shakespeare leads to extraordinary levels of comprehension.

This year, I had access to a complete facsimile of the First Folio edition of Hamlet, which I used extensively in the preparation of the script and in writing this curriculum. I am grateful to Kevin Coleman and the staff of Shakespeare & Co. for opening my eyes to the possibilities inherent in exploring the original texts. I also had the Riverside and Pelican editions of the play (based primarily on the second Quarto) by my side while writing, but any of the very good annotated texts will do -- the Arden and the Oxford editions are also favorites. I do recommend using a complete annotated text, not downloading a text-only version from the internet. I've suggested a few edited versions of the play below for younger students, and you can also download our hour-long version from sfshakes.org -- this is the text we use when performing. I still think it's preferable to introduce students to the whole play, and discuss the reasons for the cuts later when they've seen our version.

As always, teachers using this curriculum will also want to have access to a chalk or white board and a good lexicon or glossary for any words not defined in the annotated text. I suggest writing the Words of the Day on the board at the beginning of every

class, so you can refer back to them as you go along.

Your feedback is always helpful to me, and I enjoy hearing from you. Have fun!

Rebecca J. Ennals
Director of Education and Program Manager for Shakespeare on Tour

---

Rebecca J. Ennals is the Director of Education for the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival, where she manages the Festival's three educational programs -- Shakespeare on Tour, Midnight Shakespeare, and the Bay Area Shakespeare Camps. She holds an MFA in performance from U.C. Davis and a B.A. from Scripps College. An experienced educator, she has worked as an Artist in Residence in various school districts around the Bay Area, and piloted several at-risk youth programs. She has directed and acted in numerous Shakespeare productions with the Napa Valley Shakespeare Festival, Shakespeare at Stinson Beach, and the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival. She is also an award-winning playwright and poet -- her play "Sonnets for W.H.," based on Shakespeare's sonnets, was a finalist for the Samuel Goldwyn Award and Midwestern Playwrights' Award. A self-described "theatre geek" in high school, Ennals believes that arts education can inspire children and teens to achieve at every level.

The San Francisco Shakespeare Festival is one of the Bay Area's leading providers of arts education for youth. Its flagship program, **Free Shakespeare in the Park**, travels to five Bay Area communities every summer, bringing Shakespeare's plays to approximately 20,000 people, many of whom are seeing them for the first time. Over 800 children and teens attend **Bay Area Shakespeare Camps** every summer in locations from San Jose to San Francisco, Pacifica to Pleasanton. **Midnight Shakespeare,** the Festival's after-school program for at-risk youth, works with children and teens in low-income areas of San Jose, Oakland, and San Francisco. Finally, **Shakespeare on Tour** brings its acclaimed productions to classrooms all over the state, performing in front of 120,000 children every school year. For more information about the San Francisco Shakespeare Festival and its programs, please visit HYPERLINK "http://www.sfshakes.org" www.sfshakes.org.

Suggested reading:

1. Stephen Greenblatt, *Will in the World: How Shakespeare became Shakespeare,* New York, W.W. Norton & Co, 2004.

2. S. Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare, A Compact Documentary Life,* Oxford University Press, 1977.

3. William Shakespeare, ed. Paul Werstine and Barbara A. Mowat, *Hamlet*, Folger Shakespeare Library Series, Pocket Classics, 2003.

4. Lois Burdett, *Hamlet for Kids*, Introduction by Kenneth Branagh, Ontario, Canada, Firefly Books, 2000.

5. William Shakespeare, adapted by Neil Babra, *No Fear Shakespeare Graphic Novels: Hamlet,* Spark Publishing, 2008.

6. William Shakespeare, ed. Neil Freeman, *The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke: Applause First Folio Editions*, Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 2000.

If you only have one day:

the synopsis game

Goal: To introduce *Hamlet* to those who only have one day to get to know the play and its characters. If this class is done in conjunction with the rest of the curriculum, it gives students easy sound/gesture references to characters and concepts who come up again in later lessons.

Words of the Day:
synopsis
character gesture
tragedy
tragic heroes
fatal flaw

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 4: 2.0 (character gesture)
Grade 6: 2.2 (character gesture)

Language Arts:
Grade 4: 3.3 (character traits and motivations)
Grade 8: 2.4 (summary)
Grades 9-10: 3.1 (dramatic literature)

Materials: Synopsis Signs, made in advance.

Step 1: Assigning roles (10-15 minutes)

TEACHER introduces the lesson by explaining the the class will soon have the opportunity to see a production of *Hamlet* which is coming to the school.

TEACHER asks the class if they have heard of *Hamlet* before. (If you have time, this is also a good moment to do a quick discussion of who Shakespeare was, using the Day One lesson.)

STUDENTS may have seen one of the *Hamlet* films, or have some basic familiarity with the plot of the play.

TEACHER continues: It's often helpful to review the plot of the play in advance, using a summary called a **synopsis**. I'm going to read the story of the play out loud, and when you hear the name of your character, you'll have an action and a line to read out loud.

TEACHER asks for volunteers to hold the signs for the following characters:

Hamlet
King Claudius
Queen Gertrude
Ghost of Hamlet's Father
Fortinbras
Polonius
Laertes
Ophelia
Marcellus
Francisco
Bernardo
Horatio
Rosencrantz
Guildenstern
Players (this can be everyone else in the class)

(Signs should be made in advance from a piece of colored card or construction paper, one side with the name of the character and the other with his or her signature line.)

Step 2: Character gestures and Locations (10 minutes)

TEACHER asks each performer to read all the information on his/her card, and think of a **character gesture** to go with it. The character gesture should be a strong movement that embodies the personality of the character.

STUDENTS take a minute or two to work this out on their own. TEACHER can offer help to anyone who is stuck.

When everyone is ready, TEACHER continues: There are a few locations mentioned in the play. Whenever one of these locations are mentioned, we're all going to do a gesture and sound together.

TEACHER writes the following locations on the board:

Denmark
Elsinore
Norway
Wittenberg
France
England
Poland

STUDENTS can help decide on gestures and sounds, or TEACHER can pick them in advance. Some suggestions would be:

• Denmark - An unhappy sound, a disgusted gesture (as indicated by the lines "Something's rotten in the state of Denmark," "Denmark's a prison")

• Elsinore - The sound of royal trumpets, with accompanying gesture, or the sound of a wild party, lifting of glasses

• Norway - Warlike sounds, marching feet, as Norway comes to invade Denmark

• Wittenberg - A thoughtful "hmmm" sound, miming writing or reading, since Wittenberg is a university.

• France - French words like "Oui, oui!", elegant gestures

• England - Sipping tea, waving like the Queen, "I say!" "Jolly good!" or another British-ism.

• Poland - Since they're about to be conquered by Norway, they could all yell in fear, fight, try to run away.

(Naturally all this can be quite silly and fun.)

STUDENTS and TEACHER practice the Location sounds/gestures until everyone has them memorized.

Step 3: Acting out the synopsis (20-25 minutes)

STUDENTS gather in a circle so that they can all see each other.

TEACHER may go around the circle asking everyone to perform their character gesture and line, as a review and to get some of the giggles out.

TEACHER continues: There's one more aspect to this game - if your character dies, you have to perform for us a glorious, agonizing death.

TEACHER reads the synopsis below out loud, pausing after the bolded words for the individual actors, or whole class, to perform their sounds and gestures. Locations are in all-caps, and parenthetical notations (dies!) are inserted to indicate character's deaths - these shouldn't be read out loud unless the actor needs reminding. TEACHER may also choose to give STUDENTS the opportunity to read part of the synopsis. *NOTE: As the synopsis goes on, actors whose characters are mentioned many, many times, such as Hamlet, may wish to pick one word from their line or just do their gesture after a while. Sometimes I suggest this, sometimes it evolves naturally.*

synopsis

ACT ONE: It is night in **ELSINORE**. Two sentries, **Bernardo** and **Francisco,** walk the battlements of the castle. Two more young men, **Horatio** and **Marcellus**, arrive. They reveal that for the last two nights, the sentries have seen a **Ghost** on the battlements. **Horatio** is skeptical, so **Marcellus** wants him to see it with his own eyes.
The **Ghost** appears, looking just like the dead King. The men assume its appearance portends doom for the state of **DENMARK**. **Horatio** tells them all that Prince **Fortinbras** of **NORWAY** is planning to invade. **Horatio** suggests they tell Prince **Hamlet** about the **Ghost**.
The next day, **King Claudius** celebrates his marriage to **Queen Gertrude**, his brother's widow. He sends ambassadors to **NORWAY** to try to stop **Fortinbras**' invasion. Then he allows **Laertes**, son of his valued advisor **Polonius**, to travel back to **FRANCE**, where he is studying.
This business taken care of, **King Claudius** turns his attention to his sullen nephew, **Hamlet**. He and **Queen Gertrude** encourage **Hamlet** to stop being so depressed about his father's death, and to stay at **ELSINORE** with them rather than return to the University at **WITTENBERG**. Alone, **Hamlet** reveals that he is disgusted with his mother and uncle for marrying so soon after his father's death, and he wishes he could kill himself.
Horatio, **Marcellus**, and **Bernardo** arrive and tell **Hamlet** that they have seen the **Ghost** of his father. They invite **Hamlet** to join them on the battlements that night.
Elsewhere in the castle, **Laertes** is getting ready to leave for **FRANCE**. He advises his sister to discourage the romantic attentions of **Hamlet**, fearing that she may get her heart broken. **Polonius** arrives and gives **Laertes** some more wordy advice. **Laertes** leaves, and **Polonius** orders **Ophelia** to stop speaking to **Hamlet**.
That night, **Horatio**, **Hamlet**, and **Marcellus** arrive on the battlements. The **Ghost** appears and beckons for **Hamlet** to follow it.
The **Ghost** reveals that **King Claudius** poisoned him in order to steal the throne and marry **Queen Gertrude**. It demands that **Hamlet** exact revenge, but not harm his mother. **Hamlet** promises to carry out this order, then makes **Horatio** and **Marcellus** swear not to tell anyone that they've seen the **Ghost**. He tells them he may sometimes pretend to be mad in order to hide what he knows.

ACT TWO: **Polonius** sends a spy to **FRANCE** to make sure **Laertes** is behaving himself. **Ophelia** runs in, saying that **Hamlet** came to her room and acted very strangely. **Polonius** assumes that he's gone mad because **Ophelia** rejected his romantic advances. He plans to tell **King Claudius**.
Two old school friends of **Hamlet's**, **Rosencrantz** and **Guildenstern**, arrive at court. They are greeted by **King Claudius** and **Queen Gertrude**, who ask them to keep an eye on **Hamlet** and discover the reason for his strange behavior. The ambassadors from **NORWAY** return successful - **Fortinbras** will not invade **DENMARK** but pass through on his way to **POLAND**.
Polonius then presents his theory that **Hamlet** has gone mad from rejected love. He and **King Claudius** decide to spy on **Hamlet** while he speaks to **Ophelia**. **Hamlet** himself appears, and **Polonius** tries to engage him in conversation, but his responses are confusing, not quite sane and not quite mad.

Rosencrantz and **Guildenstern** greet **Hamlet** and attempt to deny that they were sent for by the **King** and **Queen**. **Hamlet** reveals his disgust and frustration with **DENMARK** and the human experience.

Polonius enters and introduces a troupe of traveling **Players** who have just arrived in **ELSINORE**. **Hamlet** asks one of the **Players** to perform a favorite speech, and is amazed when the **Player's** eyes fill with tears at his imaginary grief. Alone on stage, **Hamlet** wonders why he can't manage to to act on his own very real grief. He decides to ask the **Players** to perform a play similar to the murder of his father by his uncle, and watch the **King's** reaction, to prove that the **King** is guilty and the **Ghost** told the truth.

ACT THREE: **Rosencrantz** and **Guildenstern** report back to the **King** that they still can't guess at the cause of **Hamlet's** madness. **Polonius** asks **Ophelia** to walk around with a book, while he and **King Claudius** hide and observe **Hamlet's** behavior. **Hamlet** enters, contemplating suicide, but too fearful of the unknown afterwards to do it. **Ophelia** attempts to return his gifts, and he cruelly taunts her, telling her he never loved her and she should enter a nunnery. **Ophelia** is devastated. **King Claudius** correctly suspects that **Hamlet** isn't mad at all, but brooding over dangerous action. **Polonius** suggests he send **Hamlet** to **ENGLAND**.
Later, **Hamlet** instructs the **Players** how to perform the play he's asked them to present. The **Players** present "The Mouse-trap", in which the good Gonzago is poisoned by the evil Lucianus, and **King Claudius** reacts in surprise and horror. **Hamlet**, elated at this proof, scornfully scolds **Rosencrantz** and **Guildenstern** for spying on him. **Rosencrantz** and **Guildenstern** report back to **King Claudius**, who gives them a commission to take **Hamlet** to **ENGLAND**. Alone, the **King** is overcome with remorse at his evil deed, but can't pray for forgiveness. **Hamlet** sees him alone and unarmed, but decides not to kill him while praying, in case his soul goes to heaven. Instead he goes to **Queen Gertrude** and rebukes her with the news that she has married her husband's murderer. **Polonius,** hidden behind a tapestry in the **Queen's** chamber, panics and cries for help. **Hamlet** stabs him to death (Polonius dies!!), thinking it is **King Claudius**. The **Ghost** reappears and chides **Hamlet** for abusing his mother and delaying revenge. **Hamlet** drags **Polonius**' body away, knowing that he will be sent to **ENGLAND** and whatever fate awaits him there.

ACT FOUR: **Queen Gertrude** reports to the **King** that **Hamlet** has killed **Polonius**. **Rosencrantz** and **Guildenstern** go to find him, and he wildly mocks both them and the **King**. **Rosencrantz**, **Guildenstern**, and **Hamlet** depart for **ENGLAND**, bearing a letter in which **King Claudius** asks the English King to put **Hamlet** to death. On the way to their ship, they meet **Fortinbras**' army, marching through on their way to **POLAND**, and **Hamlet** is inspired by the ambitious nature of the Norwegian Prince to pursue his bloody revenge.
After **Hamlet's** departure and the death of **Polonius**, **Ophelia** loses her reason. **King Claudius** and **Queen Gertrude** encounter her strewing the halls with flowers and singing old country songs. **Laertes** returns from **FRANCE**, bent on revenge against **King Claudius**. The **King** and **Queen** convince him that his father's death and

Ophelia's madness are not the **King's** fault.
Horatio receives a letter from **Hamlet**, telling him that after various adventures he is on his way back to **DENMARK**. The **King** and **Laertes** devise a plot to kill **Hamlet** when he returns. The **King** will arrange a fencing competition, and **Laertes** will poison the tip of his sword and cut **Hamlet**. In case that fails, the **King** will also prepare a poisoned chalice of wine and offer it to **Hamlet** as reward. The **Queen** comes in and tells them that **Ophelia** has drowned in the river. (Ophelia dies!!)

ACT FIVE: **Hamlet** and **Horatio**, walking back to **ELSINORE**, comes across two gravediggers preparing **Ophelia's** grave. One of the gravediggers throws up an old skull, mentioning that it belongs to Yorick, the old court jester. **Hamlet** ponders the skull, reflecting that all men, from kings to peasants, eventually die and rot in the earth.
The funeral procession appears, **Laertes** mourning his sister. **Hamlet** realizes that **Ophelia** has died, and reveals himself. He fights **Laertes** over who loved **Ophelia** more. They are separated and **King Claudius** and **Laertes** decide to put their plot in motion immediately.
Back at the castle, **Hamlet** tells **Horatio** how he altered the commission so that the execution order was for **Rosencrantz** and **Guildenstern** instead of him. (Rosencrantz and Guildenstern die!!) **Horatio** worries that news of the switch will soon reach **DENMARK**, but **Hamlet** is unconcerned, saying that he is ready now to die.
Hamlet is invited to a gentlemen's duel with **Laertes**, and he accepts the challenge. The **King's** plot goes awry from the beginning. **Laertes** is unable to wound **Hamlet** during the first pass. Between rounds, **Queen Gertrude** raises a toast to **Hamlet** with the poisoned chalice. Then, in the heat of the duel, **Laertes** manages to wound **Hamlet** but loses the poisoned rapier to him, and **Laertes** himself is poisoned as well. **Queen Gertrude** swoons to her death (Queen dies!!). **Laertes** falls and reveals the plot, telling **Hamlet** he is doomed and begging for forgiveness before he, too, dies. (Laertes dies!!) Enraged, **Hamlet** stabs **King Claudius** with the poisoned foil, then makes him drink from the chalice that slew the **Queen**. (King dies!!) His revenge at last complete, **Hamlet** collapses. **Horatio** tries to drink poison and die with him, but **Hamlet** begs him to live to tell the story. He dies in **Horatio's** arms (Hamlet dies!!), giving his election to **Fortinbras**, whose trumpets announce his arrival at the castle. **Fortinbras** is left to rule **DENMARK**, and he bids his men give **Hamlet** and the rest a proper funeral.

Step 4: Discussion, Feedback, and Conclusion (10-15 minutes)

TEACHER asks for feedback from STUDENTS: What parts of the plot stood out for you during this exercise? Did you understand the order of events? What does Hamlet's central problem seem to be?

STUDENTS respond with ideas.

TEACHER continues: Hamlet is a **tragedy**, often considered to be one of the greatest tragedies ever written. **Tragic heroes** often have a **fatal flaw** that brings about their own death and the death of others. What is Hamlet's fatal flaw?

STUDENTS respond: He seems unable to do what he's promised to do. He waits to long to get revenge, and this brings about the deaths of everyone close to him. He thinks too much.

TEACHER concludes: Tomorrow (or whatever the day of the show is) you'll get to see a shortened, one-hour version of *Hamlet*. In the version we're going to see, some of the characters won't appear, such as Fortinbras, Francisco, and Bernardo. Many of the scenes will be shorter. All of the parts will be played by five actors, so, for example, Horatio and Ophelia will be played by the same person.

Homework: Write a paragraph or two about the character of Hamlet. Do you think he deserves what happens to him? Is he noble or foolish? What do you think you would do under similar circumstances?

Study Question 1 (Grades 9-12): Take a look at the Facebook parody of *Hamlet* at this link:
http://www.angelfire.com/art2/antwerplettuce/hamlet.html

Are there other posts you would add? Which points in the plot do the various posts refer to?

hamlet

Prince of Denmark
“The Melancholy Dane”

“Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!”

---

king claudius

King of Denmark
Hamlet’s uncle, brother of the dead King

“O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven.”

queen gertrude

Queen of Denmark
Hamlet's mother, now married to his uncle

"O Hamlet, thou has cleft my heart in twain."

---

marcellus

A sentry, friend of Horatio

"Something is rotten in the state of Denmark."

the ghost

The ghost of the dead King Hamlet
Hamlet's father

"Adieu, adieu, adieu. Remember me."

_____

horatio

A loyal friend of Hamlet's from the University

"I am more an antique Roman than a Dane."

ophelia

The girl Hamlet once loved, now rejected
Polonius' daughter

"O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!"

---

polonius

A trusted counselor of the King
Father of Laertes and Ophelia

"Though this be madness, yet there is method in it."

Laertes

A young nobleman
Polonius' son, Ophelia's brother

"To hell allegiance, vows to the blackest devil."

Fortinbras

Prince of Norway, nephew of the Norwegian King

"For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune."

FRANCISCO

A sentry

“‘Tis bitter cold, and I am sick at heart.”

BERNARDO

A sentry

“Let us once again assail your ears.”

ROSENCRANTZ

A childhood friend of Hamlet

“My most dear Lord!”

GUILDENSTERN

A childhood friend of Hamlet

“My honored Lord!”

players

A troupe of traveling actors

“Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune!”

Day One

Introduction to the World of the Play

Goal: To introduce Shakespeare's world and how it influenced his writing. To introduce the play, recognize its place in popular culture, and learn the names of the characters. *NOTE: If you have time, this is another good lesson to do with only a day or two to prepare before the performance.*

Words of the Day:
Renaissance
comedy
tragedy
characters
tragic hero
fatal flaw

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 7: 3.2 (Elizabethan theatre), 4.2 (cultural context)

Language Arts:
Grades 9-10: 3.1 (dramatic literature), 3.12 (historical period)
Grades 11-12: 3.7 (influences of the historical period)

Materials: Worksheet 1
Models or photographs of Shakespeare's Globe and other relevant historical photos (optional)

Step 1: Shakespeare and the Renaissance (10 minutes).

TEACHER introduces the life of Shakespeare as follows:

> William Shakespeare was born in the small town of Stratford, England in April of 1564, the son of a glovemaker and a wealthy landowner's daughter, and traveled to London to eventually join the Lord Chamberlain's Men, a company of actors, and become their principal playwright. In all he wrote nearly 40 plays, numerous epic poems, and 154 sonnets before his death in 1616. Shakespeare is generally considered to be the greatest Western playwright of all time, and his plays continue to be performed regularly around the world.
>
> While Shakespeare was writing his plays, England was enjoying a **Renaissance** of art and culture after decades of religious turmoil and political strife.

"Renaissance" is a French word that means "re-birth." Queen Elizabeth ruled England for most of Shakespeare's life, from 1558 to her death in 1603. Her reign was a period of relative stability, followed by the reign of James I, her chosen successor. Both monarchs loved plays and entertainment, and encouraged live performance.

Shakespeare spent much of his life living in London away from his wife and children, although he provided for them financially. Although he went to school in Stratford, he never went to the University, like most of the other playwrights he knew. It's likely that he became an actor first and then a playwright, later helping in the management of his theatre company. He was quite a successful businessman, and left his family members comfortably off when he died.

TEACHER may choose to share additional materials, such as models of Elizabethan theatres, pictures of Shakespeare, Queen Elizabeth, and King James, or perhaps an excerpt of Shakespeare biography on video or DVD (PBS has a good one called "In Search of Shakespeare.")

TEACHER asks: Is it important to know something about a person before you've read his or her writing? Why or why not? Do you think that knowing something about the playwright will help you to better understand the play?

STUDENTS respond with thoughts. TEACHER engages them by asking what plays, books, or movies they've most enjoyed. Did they know anything about the writer when they saw or read it? Did they find out anything later? How did that affect their enjoyment or appreciation?

Step 2: Shakespeare Quiz (20 minutes)

TEACHER divides students up into groups of about 3 students, and hands out the Shakespeare Quiz (Worksheet 1).

TEACHER continues: Take about ten minutes to complete this quiz as a team. If you don't know the answers, that's okay, just make a guess. Then we'll see which team got the most correct answers.

When finished, TEACHER goes through the quiz question by question, using the teacher's key. TEACHER awards points to each team. Some answers can even get points for creativity! Applause for the group with the most right answers.

TEACHER engages the group in discussion: Were there things in the quiz you had heard of before, or were you just guessing? Did it help to have other people in your group to share ideas with?

You can see that even though we're just beginning, there are a lot of things you

might know about Shakespeare already, just from hearing other people talk about him. He has influenced our language more than almost any other writer, and because the United States was founded by colonists from England, the Renaissance had a lot of influence on the way we think and behave even now.

Step 3: Comedy and Tragedy (10 minutes)

TEACHER continues: The play we're going to study for the next three weeks was probably written in about 1601, when Shakespeare was already a successful writer. It seems to have been an immediate success - pirated versions were published almost immediately.

The play is called *Hamlet.*

TEACHER writes the title on the board.

You've probably heard of this play, or at least of the title. What do you know about the play just from hearing people talk about it?

STUDENTS respond (they may have seen movies based on *Hamlet*, have heard famous lines like "To be or not to be," or be familiar with it from parodies like *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare, Abridged* or *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*).

TEACHER asks: What are the things you know about the story? Is it a **comedy** or a **tragedy**?

STUDENTS may guess that it's a tragedy.
]
TEACHER continues: What did you write down for Question One on the quiz? What happens in a tragedy? How about a comedy? How do we know which a play is going to be?

TEACHER lists some characteristics on the board. For tragedy, s/he may write:

Sad ending (death)
Serious themes
Fatally flawed characters

For comedy:

funny, humorous characters
happy ending
love story ending in wedding

TEACHER continues: For the Elizabethans, the two major genres, into which even the histories could be filed, were **comedy** and **tragedy**. These were the two genres recognized by the classical writers in Greece and Rome. Shakespeare ultimately expanded his writing beyond these strict definitions. *Hamlet* is often called the first modern tragedy, since the main character is such a complex **tragic hero**.

The idea of the tragic hero is much older than Shakespeare - it comes from the ancient Greeks. For them, a tragic hero was a man who was noble in almost every way, but had a single **fatal flaw** which leads to his undoing and, ultimately, his death. As we read *Hamlet*, we'll talk about the character of Hamlet and whether we believe he has this kind of fatal flaw.

Step 4: Characters (15 minutes)

TEACHER writes all the characters' names on the board. The characters are:

Prince Hamlet
King Claudius
Queen Gertrude
Ghost of Hamlet's Father
Polonius
Laertes
Ophelia
Marcellus
(Francisco)
(Bernardo)
Horatio
Rosencrantz
Guildenstern
Players
Messenger
(Prince Fortinbras)
(Voltemand)
(Cornelius)
(Reynaldo)
(Osric)
(Priest)
(Two Grave-diggers)
(Norwegian Captain)
(English Ambassadors)
(Attendants, soldiers, sailors, courtiers)

(The characters in parentheses do not appear in the shortened Shakespeare on Tour version of the play.)

TEACHER continues: Here is a list of all the **characters** in the play. Which characters do you think have the most power in the play? How can you tell?

STUDENTS guess the King and Queen, followed by the Princes.

TEACHER continues: Before the beginning of the play, Hamlet's father, the King, has died. In the normal order of succession, who do you think would be crowned King?

STUDENTS may guess that Prince Hamlet would naturally become King after the death of his father.

TEACHER continues: Hamlet seems to have been away at college when his father died, and somehow Claudius, the dead King's brother, got himself crowned King. Shakespeare doesn't tell us the details of how this happened, so we have to guess. We do know that Claudius is a good politician and a persuasive person. Shortly after his brother's death, he also persuades his brother's widow to marry him. So Hamlet returns home for the funeral to find out his mother is marrying his uncle.

How would you feel in a situation like that?

STUDENTS give feedback, discuss.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER concludes: We now know a little about the time when Shakespeare wrote this play, the names of the characters, and a little about what happens before the beginning of the play. Tomorrow we'll find out more about the story of the play, also called the plot.

Homework: Write an imaginary speech for Claudius, persuading the people that he would make a better king than Prince Hamlet.

Study question 1 (grades 6-12): What else would you like to know about Shakespeare? Take a moment to write down a question to which you'd like to find the answers. Share your question with the class and find out if anyone else knows the answers, or look the answers up in Shakespeare biographies or reference books available (see suggested reading list for some ideas.) Write a one-page paper explaining what you've discovered.

Study question 2 (grades 4-8): Pretend you're an actor at the Globe Theatre. Write a journal entry about what it's like to perform there. What Renaissance people can you talk about in your journal entry?

Activity 1 (grades 4-6): As a class or in smaller groups, build a paper model of the Globe (kits are available from some bookstores, or you can do a simple one with cardboard and construction paper). What does the model tell you about the way the plays were performed? What kind of scenery, lights, and costumes do you think they used? Where did the audience sit or stand?

Worksheet One

Shakespeare Quiz

1. What is the difference between a **comedy** and a **tragedy**?

2. Which of the following were written by Shakespeare (circle them)?

Twelfth Night	Treasure Island
King Richard III	Much Ado About Nothing
Othello	Great Expectations
Tartuffe	King Lear

3. True or False: Queen Elizabeth ruled England throughout Shakespeare's life.

4. True or False: Shakespeare never went to college.

5. True or False: Shakespeare's plays were never published in his lifetime.

6. Which of the following famous expressions come from *Hamlet*?

"Method in his madness."	"Live and let live."
"Nothing is certain but death and taxes."	"The play's the thing."
"Hold the mirror up to nature."	"To thine own self be true."
"Neither a borrower nor a lender be."	"Give me liberty or give me death."

7. Which of the following things were invented during the Renaissance?

Submarine	Eye glasses
Microscope	Steam engine
Wallpaper	Measles vaccine

Worksheet One (teacher's key)

Shakespeare Quiz

1. What is the difference between a **comedy** and a **tragedy**? Comedies end happily, usually with marriage. Tragedies end unhappily, with the death of the main character.

2. Which of the following were written by Shakespeare (in bold)?

Twelfth Night Treasure Island

King Richard III **Much Ado About Nothing**

Othello Great Expectations

Tartuffe **King Lear**

3. True or False: Queen Elizabeth ruled England throughout Shakespeare's life. False, King James took the throne while Shakespeare was at the height of his success.

4. True or False: Shakespeare never went to college. True, Shakespeare had a good country grammar-school education, but never attended a University.

5. True or False: Shakespeare's plays were never published in his lifetime. False, although Shakespeare did not publish his plays himself, some "quartos" of his most popular plays, including *Hamlet*, were published in his lifetime. The first collected edition of his plays, the "First Folio", was published after his death.

6. Which of the following famous expressions come from *Hamlet*?

"Method in his madness." "Live and let live."

"Nothing is certain but death and taxes." **"The play's the thing."**

"Hold the mirror up to nature." **"To thine own self be true."**

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be." "Give me liberty or give me death."

7. Which of the following things were invented during the Renaissance?

Submarine **Eye glasses**

Microscope Steam engine

Wallpaper Measles vaccine

Day Two

The Sources for Hamlet

Goal: To find out where Shakespeare got the idea for the plot of *Hamlet*. To learn the basic outline of a plot. *NOTE: The synopsis exercise can also be used on this day.*

Words of the Day:
source material
plot
exposition
complication (rising action)
crisis
climax
resolution (denouement)

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 4: 1.1 (plot, climax, resolution)
Grade 5: 1.2 (analyzing plot), 2.1 (improvisational activities)
Grade 7: 1.2 (rising action, crisis, denouement)

Language Arts:
Grade 4: 3.2 (plot)
Grade 8: 3.2 (plot)

Materials: Worksheet 2

Step 1: Review homework (10 minutes).

TEACHER asks for volunteers to read aloud their Claudius speeches.

Three or four STUDENTS read aloud from their homework assignments.

STUDENTS discuss ideas about how Claudius might have managed to take the throne of Denmark.

Step 2: Exploring earlier versions of the *Hamlet* story (20 minutes).

TEACHER continues: Shakespeare usually wrote his plays based on an existing story. The story of Hamlet the Prince of Denmark existed in at least three different forms before Shakespeare wrote the version we know now. The first version was a Norse myth, found in a book called the *Historia Danica* of Saxo Grammaticus.

The second version was by a French writer Belleforest, in a collection called the *Histoires Tragiques*. Finally, in Shakespeare's own time, there was a popular play about Hamlet, perhaps by Thomas Kyd. No copies of this play remain, although it was written about in various accounts of the period. It is theoretically called the *Ur-Hamlet*.

Shakespeare may have based his version on one or all of these versions - we have no way of knowing. Scholars call these various versions Shakespeare's sources or **source material**. We can compare and contrast some of the events of the play with those of the earlier versions.

TEACHER hands out Worksheet 2 and continues: This worksheet lists some of the major events in the plots of the Norse version, the French version, and Shakespeare's version of the Hamlet story. We're going to break into three groups - each group will present a short play based on the plots - it should only be about 5 minutes long. Then we'll perform them for each other and compare and contrast the three different versions.

TEACHER divides STUDENTS up into three groups. Groups work on their own for about 15 minutes, deciding how to perform their versions of the story. TEACHER should talk to the groups and check on their progress.

Step 3: Three different versions of the Hamlet story (20 minutes)

At the end of the 15-minute preparation, the groups perform their short plays for each other.

TEACHER asks: Which version did you prefer? Which seemed to make the most sense? Did the main character of Hamlet seem similar in each version, or different?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. Their favorite version may not be Shakespeare's version - it is often hard to understand why Hamlet behaves the way he does. Many will probably prefer the more straightforward, satisfying revenge story of the Norse or French versions.

Step 4: Conclusion: Identifying plot points (10 minutes)

TEACHER lists the following words on the board:

exposition
complications (rising action)
crisis
climax
resolution

TEACHER asks: In literature and drama, we call the events of the story the **plot**. These are the basic elements that make up a plot. Can anyone define these words?

STUDENTS respond, with assistance as needed:

Exposition: The characters describe what has just happened to them. Major characters, locations, and situations are introduced.

Complications: Also called the "rising action." Events occur that place the characters in situations where they encounter problems and obstacles.

Crisis: A major conflict emerges that must be solved by the main characters before they can get what they want.

Climax: The crisis reaches its peak. The main characters are forced into action. At this point, everything is at stake and a comedy can become a tragedy (and vice versa.)

Resolution: The ending. Also called the "denouement." The aftermath of the climax.

TEACHER concludes: For homework, you'll be identifying these plot points for the version of *Hamlet* that your group performed. Tomorrow we'll start to explore the language that Shakespeare used in his plays, to better understand it before we begin reading.

Homework: Go through Worksheet 2 and mark where you think the major plot points occur in your version of the Hamlet story.

Study Question 1 (Grades 9-12): Hamlet's original name in Norse legend was "Amlothi," meaning "desperate in battle," and also possibly "crazy" or "simpleton." Using the internet and other resources, look up the names of other characters in the play and see if you can find meanings or earlier versions. Do any of the names give an indication of the character's personalities?

Worksheet two

Historia Danica	**Belleforest**	**Shakespeare**
King Horwendillus is killed by Fengo, his brother, with a sword during a feast.	Fengon kills King Horvendille to save the Queen's life; the court knows about it.	No one knows that Claudius killed King Hamlet secretly by poison.
Queen Gerutha marries Fengo.	Geruthe has clearly been having an affair with Fengon, and marries him.	Queen Gertrude seems to love Claudius and doesn't know about the murder.
No ghost returns to tell Amlethus, the King's son, of the murder; he decides on revenge himself.	No ghost returns to tell Amleth, the King's son, of the murder; he decides on revenge himself.	Hamlet's father returns as a ghost to urge him to revenge.
Amlethus pretends to be mad to cleverly outwit his enemies and justify his outrageous, violent revenge.	Amleth pretends to be mad in self-protection. Fengon tries to prove him sane.	Hamlet pretends to be mad, but we're not sure why. To buy himself time?
His enemies get a courtesan to seduce him; he rapes her.	Fengon tries to trick Amleth using his mistress, who he loves. (She is not related to the king's advisor.) Amleth avoids the trap, on the advice of a friend.	Claudius and Polonius use Ophelia, Polonius' daughter, to test Hamlet's madness. Hamlet claims to have loved her.
There is no play to test the King.	There is no play to test the King.	Hamlet has a play performed to prove the King's guilt.
Amlethus violently accuses his mother of incest.	Amleth successfully feigns madness when the King plants a spy in his mother's chamber.	Hamlet accuses his mother of incest; he does not seem to be feigning madness at the time.
Amlethus has the King's	Amleth runs madly	Hamlet discovers

advisor boiled to death and fed to the pigs.	around his mother's chamber and stabs the spy.	Polonius spying and kills him, leading to Ophelia's real madness.
No definite correlation.	Queen Geruthe believes Amleth and is on his side after this event.	Queen Gertrude thinks her son is mad and stays on Claudius' side.
Amlethus makes a voyage to England and wins the King's daughter with his wit.	Amleth goes to England for a year, escapes being executed, has his companions executed instead, and marries the English King's daughter.	Hamlet is sent to England to be executed, but escapes and has Rosencrantz and Guildenstern executed instead.
Amlethus outwits the King, who attempts to kill him with a poisoned sword, by changing swords with him and killing him.	Amleth continues to feign madness, and successfully kills the King by exchanging swords with him.	Claudius plots with Ophelia's brother Laertes to kill Hamlet with a poisoned sword. As back-up, he prepares a poison drink.
Amlethus burns down the palace and declares himself King of Denmark.	Amleth burns down the banqueting-hall and declares himself King of Denmark.	Hamlet kills Laertes with the poisoned sword, but not before he himself is scratched. Gertrude accidentally poisons herself with the drink. Hamlet kills the King before he, too, dies. The Prince of Norway is left to rule Denmark.

Worksheet two (teacher's key)

Historia Danica	Belleforest	Shakespeare
EXPOSITION:		
King Horwendillus is killed by Fengo, his brother, with a sword during a feast.	Fengon kills King Horvendille to save the Queen's life; the court knows about it.	No one knows that Claudius killed King Hamlet secretly by poison.
Queen Gerutha marries Fengo.	Geruthe has clearly been having an affair with Fengon, and marries him.	Queen Gertrude seems to love Claudius and doesn't know about the murder.
COMPLICATIONS:		
No ghost returns to tell Amlethus, the King's son, of the murder; he decides on revenge himself.	No ghost returns to tell Amleth, the King's son, of the murder; he decides on revenge himself.	Hamlet's father's returns as a ghost to urge him to revenge.
Amlethus pretends to be mad to cleverly outwit his enemies and justify his outrageous, violent revenge.	Amleth pretends to be mad in self-protection. Fengon tries to prove him sane.	Hamlet pretends to be mad, but we're not sure why. To buy himself time?
His enemies get a courtesan to seduce him; he rapes her.	Fengon tries to trick Amleth using his mistress, who he loves. (She is not related to the king's advisor.) Amleth avoids the trap, on the advice of a friend.	Claudius and Polonius use Ophelia, Polonius' daughter, to test Hamlet's madness. It's unclear whether they have been lovers physically, though Hamlet claims to have loved her.
CRISIS (this could be debated - it's at a different place in each version):		
There is no play to test the King.	There is no play to test the King.	Hamlet has a play performed to prove the King's guilt.

Amlethus violently accuses his mother of incest.	Amleth successfully feigns madness when the King plants a spy in his mother's chamber.	Hamlet accuses his mother of incest; he does not seem to be feigning madness at the time.
Amlethus has the King's advisor boiled to death and fed to the pigs.	Amleth runs madly around his mother's chamber and stabs the spy.	Hamlet discovers Polonius spying and kills him, leading to Ophelia's real madness.
No definite correlation.	Queen Geruthe believes Amleth and is on his side after this event.	Queen Gertrude thinks her son is mad and stays on Claudius' side.
Amlethus makes a voyage to England and wins the King's daughter with his wit.	Amleth goes to England for a year, escapes being executed, has his companions executed instead, and marries the English King's daughter.	Hamlet is sent to England to be executed, but escapes and has Rosencrantz and Guildenstern executed instead.
Amlethus outwits the King, who attempts to kill him with a poisoned sword, by changing swords with him and killing him.	Amleth continues to feign madness, and successfully kills the King by exchanging swords with him.	Claudius plots with Ophelia's brother and Polonius' son Laertes to kill Hamlet with a poisoned sword. As back-up, he prepares a poison drink.
CLIMAX/RESOLUTION:		
Amlethus burns down the palace and declares himself King of Denmark.	Amleth burns down the banqueting-hall and declares himself King of Denmark.	Hamlet kills Laertes with the poisoned sword, but not before he himself is scratched. Gertrude accidentally poisons herself with

the drink. Hamlet kills the King before he, too, dies. The Prince of Norway is left to rule Denmark.

Day three

Shakespeare's Language

Goal: To learn how to scan verse. To identify the rhyme scheme of a sonnet.

Words of the Day:
verse
iambic pentameter
stress
slack
foot
iamb
scansion
trochee
feminine (weak) ending
elision

Content Standards:
Language Arts:
Grade 5: 3.1 (poetry)
Grade 6: 3.4 (poetry)
Grade 8: 3.1 (poetry)
Grades 11-12: 3.3 (sound of language)

Materials: Worksheet 3

Step 1: Review the homework (10 minutes).

TEACHER reviews the STUDENTS' ideas about the plot points in each version of the Hamlet story.

TEACHER says: Now that we've learned about the story of *Hamlet*, we're going to look at the style of writing Shakespeare used to tell his version of the story.

Step 2: Scanning iambic pentameter verse (20 minutes).

TEACHER passes out Worksheet 3 and continues: Shakespeare wrote most of the **verse** in his plays, including the speeches on this worksheet, in a particular structure called **iambic pentameter**. This is a Latin term -- let's break it down. "Penta" means five, and "meter" means "measure" or part, so presumably pentameter means that there are five parts to the line. Let's count the syllables in the very first line of Claudius' speech.

STUDENTS clap out the syllables.

Though yet of Ham•let our dear bro•ther's death

TEACHER continues: There are ten syllables, right? And we're looking for five parts. So the parts aren't just syllables.

What about iambic? Is there a clue there? "Iambic" has to do with the way you **stress** the syllables in the line. Let's all say the word "Hamlet" together. Did you say both syllables the same, or was there one that seemed to have more emphasis? What if you try stressing the other syllable -- does it sound funny?

STUDENTS respond, trying both HAM-let and Ham-LET, concluding that the first version sounds more natural to them.

TEACHER continues: Let's read the whole line and count the number of stressed syllables. We'll put a stress mark over those syllables that looks like this: /. Then we'll put a **slack** mark over the unstressed syllables that looks like this: U. (TEACHER can have a volunteer come to the board to do this and everyone can do it on their worksheets.)

STUDENTS read the line aloud and assign the stresses and slacks as follows:

u / u / u / u / u /
Though yet of Ham•let our dear bro•ther's death

TEACHER continues: The sound is similar to duh-DUM. Duh-DUM, duh-DUM, duh-DUM -- what else does that sound like?

STUDENTS respond that it sounds like a heartbeat, or maybe a galloping horse.

TEACHER continues: Shakespeare used a kind of verse so natural to us, it sounds like the rhythm that keeps us alive. Each time we repeat that duh-DUM sound, it's called an **iamb**, or an iambic **foot**. How many iambic feet are in this line?

STUDENTS respond that there are five.

TEACHER continues: Right! There's the five we were looking for. So a line that has five iambic feet is written in iambic pentameter. Can you divide up the feet in this line? It's okay to divide words in half when you're doing this. (TEACHER can have a volunteer come to the board to do this.)

STUDENTS suggest the following division:

Though yet /of Ham/let our /dear bro/ther's death

TEACHER continues: This is a perfect iambic pentameter line! Breaking it up into feet and assigning stress marks to a line like this is called **scansion**.

Step 3: Extra syllables in lines (10 minutes).

TEACHER continues: Of course, it wouldn't be very interesting if every line in Shakespeare was like this. We might be put to sleep. So Shakespeare shook things up frequently by using some different techniques.

Let's look at the next line.

The memory be green, and that it us befitted

We could just scan this the way we did the first line. Let's try it and hear how it sounds. (A volunteer can do this on the board.)

u / u / u / u / u /
The memory be green, and that it us befitted

TEACHER continues: What happens here? We used up our five iambs, and we still have three syllables left over! Why do you think Shakespeare would give Claudius three extra syllables?

STUDENTS guess: Maybe it indicates right away that this is a man who breaks rules - this is his very first speech in the play! Or maybe he's wordy, or self-important, and needs more words to say what he's trying to say than other people.

TEACHER adds breaks between the feet and extra stresses as follows:

u / u / u / u / u u / u
The mem/o•ry /be green,/ and that/ it us /be•fit/ted

What happens at the end of this line?

STUDENTS notice that there's an extra unstressed syllable.

TEACHER continues: This is fairly common in Shakespeare's verse -- it's sometimes called a **feminine ending**, although in this less sexist day and age we can call it a "**weak" ending**. It's not actually weak at all, but a very interesting choice. It might be Shakespeare's way of saying that this line should run directly into the next line without a pause. Thematically, it might mean something else. Take a look at the very last line on your worksheet, a very famous line of Hamlet's.

To be or not to be, that is the question.

Let's try clapping out the rhythm of the line.

STUDENTS clap it out, and discover the extra "tion" at the end of the line.

TEACHER continues: Hamlet is feeling lonely and uncertain during this speech. He doesn't know whether he'd rather live or die. The ending is weak because Hamlet is indecisive. What would happen if we took away that last weak syllable? What would the line say then?

STUDENTS realize that it would say "To be or not to be, that is the quest."

TEACHER continues: If the line ended that way, Hamlet would sound much more decisive, like he'd made up his mind whether to live or die. Sometimes the keys to a character's emotions are right there in the verse -- that's part of what makes Shakespeare so amazing.

Step 4: Different kinds of verse feet (10 minutes).

TEACHER continues: Let's look at the fifth line in Claudius' speech:

Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature

Would anyone like to try scanning this on the board?

STUDENTS scan the line as follows:

u / u / u / u / u / u
Yet so/ far hath /dis•cre/tion fought/ with na/ture

TEACHER continues: This looks like a pretty normal line, five iambic feet plus a weak ending. Let's try saying this line out loud, over-stressing the stressed syllables.

STUDENTS try this. It may sound fine to some of them, and funny to others.

TEACHER says: It sounds a little funny because some of the words we're stressing are very small, unimportant words. Which ones are they?

STUDENTS identify "so" and "hath."

TEACHER continues: It's not incorrect to stress those words, but luckily we have some other tools in our scansion toolbox. Try switching the stresses in the first two feet, so the line looks like this:

/ u / u u / u / u / u
Yet so/ far hath /dis•cre/tion fought/ with na/ture

The word “yet” indicates a change in the direction of the sentence, an interruption, like “but” or “however.” So it makes sense to stress that word. “Far” also seems more important than “hath” - it indicates an amount, a length, a comparison. The reverse of an iamb is called a **trochee** - it’s a verse foot that has a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed - DUM-duh. There are a few different kinds of feet in Shakespeare’s verse and they all have different names, but the most important thing to remember is that there should be five feet with five stress marks in every line. Shakespeare even breaks that rule sometimes, but always for a reason.

The important thing to remember is that there are a lot of right answers, and different actors playing the same part might choose to stress different syllables for different reasons.

Step 5: Scansion practice (5 minutes).

If there’s time, STUDENTS scan the rest of the worksheet on their own, to see what it might reveal about the character and the situation. Remind the students that there are sometimes multiple ways to scan the same line and lots of right answers. Refer to the teacher’s key for ideas. Many of the lines will be regular iambic pentameter, but a number of the feet could be trochees rather than iambs, and there are some extra syllables as well.

STUDENTS will probably find that in some lines have extra syllables, words have to be compressed in order to have an appropriate number of syllables. For example:

u / u / u / u / u /
Th’im•per/ial joint/ress to/ this war/like state,

u / u / u / u / u / u
With mirth/ in fu/neral, and /with dirge/ in mar/riage,

TEACHER observes: In the first line, the words “the imperial”, which could be pronounced with five syllables total, is compressed into three syllables by squeezing “the” in front of the starting vowel sound of “imp” and pronouncing “ial” as one syllable instead of two. This turns the line into a pretty ordinary iambic line.

The same thing happens in the next line with “funeral,” which is compressed into two syllables instead of three. This kind of compression, or combining of syllables, in the verse is called an **elision**.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER concludes: We've covered a lot today, and we haven't discussed what these lines actually mean. Shakespeare sometimes seems like a foreign language. We'll start to look at that tomorrow as we explore the first few scenes of the play.

Homework: If you haven't already, scan the rest of Claudius' speech on Worksheet 3. Practice saying it out loud using the scansion as your guide. Look up any unfamiliar words in your glossary or dictionary. Try putting the speech into your own words.

Activity 1 (Grades 4-8): Find a simple poem with a regular, preferably rhymed, rhythm in the library (Dr. Suess is great!) Make a photocopy and use scansion to analyze it. How many syllables are in each line? How many stressed syllables?

Study Question 1 (Grades 7-12): Write your own short poem in iambic pentameter. Scan it to make sure you have ten syllables per line and five stressed syllables.

Worksheet Four

Iambic Pentameter

King Claudius:

Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death

The memory be green, and that it us befitted

To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom

To be contracted in one brow of woe,

Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature

That we with wisest sorrow think on him

Together with remembrance of ourselves.

Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,

Th' imperial jointress to this warlike state,

Have we, as 'twere with a defeated joy,

With an auspicious, and a dropping eye,

With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,

In equal scale weighing delight and dole,

Taken to wife; nor have we herein barr'd

Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone

With this affair along. For all, our thanks.

Hamlet:

To be or not to be, that is the question.

Worksheet four (teacher's key)

Iambic pentameter

King Claudius:

u / u / u / u / u /
Though yet /of Ham/let our /dear bro/ther's death
u / u / u / u / u / u / u
The mem/o•ry/ be green, /and that /it us /be•fit/ted
u / u / u / u / u / u
To bear/ our hearts /in grief, /and our /whole king/dom
u / u / u / u / u /
To be /con•trac/ted in /one brow /of woe,
/ u / u u / u / u / u
Yet so/ far hath /dis•cre/tion fought /with na/ture
u / u / u / u / u /
That we/with wis/est sor/row think /on him
u / u / u / u / u /
To•ge/ther with /re•mem/brance of /our•selves.
/ u u / u / u / u /
There•fore /our some/time sis/ter, now /our queen,
u / u / u / u / u /
Th' im•per/ial join/tress to/ this war/like state,
u / u / / u u / u /
Have we,/ as 'twere /with a /de•feat/ed joy,
/ u u / u / u / u /
With an/ aus•pi/cious, and /a drop/ping eye,
u / u / u / u / u / u
With mirth/ in fun/eral, and/ with dirge/ in mar/riage,
u / u / / u u / u /
In e/qual scale/ weigh•ing /de•light /and dole,
/ u u / / u u / u /
Tak•en /to wife; /nor have/ we here/in barr'd
u / u / u / u / u /
Your bet/ter wis/doms, which /have free/ly gone
u / u / u / u / u /
With this/ af•fair /a•long./ For all,/ our thanks.

Hamlet:
u / u / u / / u u / u
To be/ or not /to be, /that is/ the quest/ion.

Day Four

A Ghost Story

Goal: To understand the expository scenes and how they set up the action to come. To learn the basic vocabulary of staging. To use implied stage directions and other context clues to stage a scene.

Words of the Day:
implied stage directions
prose
blocking
stage right
stage left
upstage
downstage
rake

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 4: 1.2 (character)
Grade 5: 2.2 (blocking), 2.3 (theatrical collaboration)
Grades 9-12: 2.3 (perform Shakespearean scenes)

Language Arts:
Grade 7: 3.1 (prose)

Materials: Worksheet 4

Step 1: Review homework (10 minutes).

TEACHER asks: Is there anyone who would like to read out loud the speech from yesterday in their own words, then read the actual lines, keeping in mind our scansion?

STUDENT volunteers read out loud from their homework. TEACHER corrects meanings as needed. It may help to have another volunteer look up words in a lexicon or dictionary. TEACHER should also help with word pronunciation.

TEACHER continues: Once you get the words off the page and into the mouths of actors, you can hear how much they change and how much each actor can interpret them. What information did we find out in this speech, which happens at the very beginning of the second scene of the play?

STUDENTS respond that we find out the old King Hamlet, the new King's brother, is dead, and that the new King has married the old King's widow.

TEACHER asks: Out of the plot points we discussed two days ago, what part of the plot is this speech?

STUDENTS guess that it's part of the exposition.

Step 2: Stage Directions (15 minutes).

TEACHER passes our Worksheet 4 and continues: Let's pretend we're a company of actors staging these scenes. Let's go over some basics of staging.

TEACHER writes on the board the following words:

Blocking

Stage left

Stage right

Centerstage

Upstage

Downstage

TEACHER continues: These are some really basic terms that will help you as you're deciding how to stage the scenes. Can anyone define these words?

STUDENTS offer suggestions: **Stage left**, **stage right** and **centerstage** should be easy, but remember that these directions are always from the actor's perspective, so if you're watching from the audience, everything is reversed. **Upstage** means the back of the stage, away from the audience and **downstage** is the front of the stage, towards the audience. These directions come from a time when stages were on a slope, called a **rake**, with the back of the stage higher than the front, allowing the audience to better see the action.

The word for stage movement in general is **blocking**. If a director says s/he is going to block a scene, it means that s/he is going to tell the actors where to enter, where to move and stand during the scene, and where to exit. Blocking can also include physical bits like stage combat, physical comedy, etc.

TEACHER has students stand on one side of the room or on stage if you have access to a stage. S/he then leads the class in a game of “Simon Says,” using blocking terms. For example, “Simon Says walk stage right,” “Simon Says come downstage,” “Stand center stage,” etc.

Step 3: Staging expository scenes (20 minutes).

TEACHER divides STUDENTS up into groups of 2-3 actors and continues: Take a look at these scenes and see if you can scan the language, according to the rules of iambic pentameter we learned yesterday.

STUDENTS try to scan scenes together. Those doing Scenes 2 and 3 shouldn’t have much trouble, but Scene 1 will be difficult for the first few lines. After allowing them to work for a few minutes, TEACHER stops them.

TEACHER continues: Was anyone with Scene 1 able to scan it successfully?

STUDENTS may have been able to scan the second half of the scene, but not the first.

TEACHER continues: The first part of this scene actually can’t be scanned because it’s not in verse! Can anyone guess what style it’s written in? Here’s a hint -- it’s the style that you most often read in every day.

STUDENTS may be able to guess that it’s in **prose**.

TEACHER continues: Shakespeare frequently switched from writing in verse to writing in prose, depending on which characters were speaking. What type of characters do these people seem to be?

STUDENTS respond that they seem to be sentries on the battlements.

TEACHER continues: Those of you with Scenes 2 and 3 -- do you think they’re in prose or verse? How can you tell?

STUDENTS may have had some trouble with the shorter lines in Scene 3, but realized if they combine two short lines, it makes one complete iambic pentameter line.

TEACHER says: If you’re looking for an easy hint to whether something is in verse or prose, look at the margins. If the lines stop before the end of the page, that’s probably a good indication you’re reading verse. If lines continue on and aren’t all capitalized, that may indicate your reading prose.

In your groups, spend about 15 minutes staging these scenes. Keep an eye out for **implied stage directions**. For example, when Horatio says “Well, sit we down” it implies that the men may take a seat to talk. As you stage the scene, try

to follow these directions that Shakespeare has put in the scene for you.

STUDENTS work on their own, with TEACHER going from group to group helping them to understand what's happening in each scene.

Step 4: Presenting scenes (10 minutes).

TEACHER chooses a group to perform each scene for the class. S/he should encourage, as always, good audience behavior and applause after every performance. Afterwards, STUDENTS try to identify the following:

- Who are the characters? What is their relationship to each other?
- Where do you think they are?
- What has happened right before the scene? What might happen next?
- Did you find any interesting things when you scanned the verse?
- What words were the most difficult? How did you figure out what they meant?

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER concludes: We've now seen what's happening with several of the plays' characters right at the beginning of the play. These scenes are all part of the exposition, as we discussed yesterday. The old King is dead, and his ghost seems to be walking around at night. The new King has married his sister-in-law. The young Prince is back home, but very unhappy. As Marcellus says, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark."

Homework: Try to read Act I, scenes i-ii on your own at home. Look up words you don't understand. (Younger students may wish to use an abridged version.)

Study Question 1 (Grades 9-12): Research the history of theatre architecture from the Greeks to the present day. How many kinds of theatres are there? What are they called?

Study Question 2 (Grades 11-12): Look at Horatio's long speech about Fortinbras in the middle of the first scene. This speech is often cut from performances. Why do you think Shakespeare would include such a lot of information about the Norwegian royal family?

Worksheet Four

Scene 1 ~~ On the Battlements

Marcellus. Holla, Bernardo!

Bernardo. Say-
What, is Horatio there ?

Horatio. A piece of him.

Bernardo. Welcome, Horatio. Welcome, good Marcellus.

Marcellus. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

Bernardo. I have seen nothing.

Marcellus. Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,
And will not let belief take hold of him
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us.
Therefore I have entreated him along,
With us to watch the minutes of this night,
That, if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes and speak to it.

Horatio. Tush, tush, 'twill not appear.

Bernardo. Sit down awhile,
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we two nights have seen.

Horatio. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Bernardo. Last night of all,
When yond same star that's westward from the pole
Had made his course t' illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one-

Enter Ghost.

Marcellus. Peace! break thee off! Look where it comes again!

Scene 2 ~~ the Royal Family

Claudius. But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son-

Hamlet. A little more than kin, and less than kind.

Claudius. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?

Hamlet. Not so, my lord. I am too much i' th' sun.

Gertrude. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever with thy vailed lids
Seek for thy noble father in the dust.
Thou know'st 'tis common. All that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.

Hamlet. Ay, madam, it is common.

Claudius. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
To give these mourning duties to your father;
But you must know, your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his, But to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde to our desire;
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Gertrude. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet.
I pray thee stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Hamlet. I shall in all my best obey you, madam.

Claudius. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply.
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come.

Exeunt all but Hamlet.

Hamlet. O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable

Seem to me all the uses of this world!

Scene 3 ~~ Hamlet and Horatio

Hamlet. My father- methinks I see my father.

Horatio. O, where, my lord?

Hamlet. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Horatio. I saw him once. He was a goodly king.

Hamlet. He was a man, take him for all in all.
I shall not look upon his like again.

Horatio. My lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Hamlet. Saw? who?

Horatio. My lord, the King your father.

Hamlet. The King my father?

Horatio. Season your admiration for a while
With an attent ear, till I may deliver
Upon the witness of these gentlemen,
This marvel to you.

Hamlet. For God's love let me hear!

Horatio. Two nights together had these gentlemen
(Marcellus and Bernardo) on their watch
In the dead vast and middle of the night
Been thus encount'red. A figure like your father,
Goes slow and stately by them. Thrice he walk'd
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did,
And I with them the third night kept the watch;
Where, as they had deliver'd, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes. I knew your father.
These hands are not more like.

Day Five

Something Rotten

Goal: To identify the complications or rising action of the plot, and discover the characters' objectives. To identify some of the figures of speech used by Shakespeare.

Words of the Day:
soliloquy
fourth wall
metaphor
hyperbole
simile
foreshadowing

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 8: 1.3 (figurative language)
Grades 9-12, advanced: 1.3 (metaphor)

Language Arts:
Grade 4: 3.5 (figurative language, hyperbole)
Grade 5: 1.5 (metaphor), 3.5 (metaphor)
Grade 6: 1.2 (figurative language), 3.4 (figurative language), 3.7 (metaphor)
Grade 7: 1.1 (metaphor)
Grade 8: 1.1 (metaphor), 3.6 (metaphor)
Grades 9-10: 1.1 (figurative language), 3.7 (figurative language)
Grades 9-10: 3.4 (soliloquy), 3.10 (soliloquy)

Materials: None

Step 1: Review homework (10 minutes).

TEACHER asks a volunteer to summarize each scene they read. *NOTE: This might also be a good time to do the synopsis game for the first two scenes only.*

Summaries might be as follows:

I.i: The Danish sentries have seen the ghost of the dead King walking the battlements. Horatio doesn't believe them until he sees it himself. He assumes that it's a bad omen, since there is unrest in the country. The nephew of the Norwegian King, slain by old King Hamlet, is planning to invade Denmark.

Horatio plans to tell young Prince Hamlet what they have seen.

I.ii: King Claudius, brother of the dead King, has been crowned and has also married his brother's widow. He is disappointed that his nephew, young Hamlet, is still in mourning. He and Queen Gertrude encourage Hamlet to cheer up and not return to school at Wittenberg. Alone, Hamlet laments his dead father and rails at his mother for marrying his uncle. He wishes he could kill himself. Horatio and the sentries find him in this state and tell him about the ghost.

Step 2: Soliloquies (25 minutes).

TEACHER asks: How do we know how Hamlet is feeling in I.ii?

STUDENTS respond that he tells us in a long speech.

TEACHER continues: When Hamlet is alone on stage, he has long speeches in which he tells us, the audience, about his state of mind. Very few characters in the play get to do this - and Hamlet does it more than anyone else. A speech like this is called a **soliloquy**. Hamlet has several important soliloquies in the play, and this is the first one.

To whom is Hamlet talking here?

STUDENTS may say that he's talking to himself, the audience, God, an imaginary friend, etc.

TEACHER continues: Today, we're used to realistic types of theatre and movies where characters don't usually talk to the audience. But in Shakespeare's time, there was no **fourth wall** between the actors and the audience - the actors never pretended like the audience wasn't there. The concept of the fourth wall came later, in the 19th century.

As the actor playing this role, you could talk directly to the audience, or you could imagine that you were speaking to someone else, like God, an imaginary friend, someone like that.

Let's take a look at this first long soliloquy and see what it tells us about Hamlet at this moment in time.

STUDENTS take out their texts and open to the following speech in I.ii:

O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew;
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable

Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! ah, fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead! Nay, not so much, not two.
So excellent a king, that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on; and yet, within a month-
Let me not think on't! Frailty, thy name is woman!-
A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body
Like Niobe, all tears- why she, even she
(O God! a beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourn'd longer) married with my uncle;
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month,
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married. O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets.
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.
But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

TEACHER continues: Let's take this in small chunks, so it's not so overwhelming. Let's look at the first four lines.

O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew;
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His canon 'gainst self-slaughter! O God! God!

What is Hamlet wishing would happen to him in the first two lines?

STUDENTS guess that he's wishing he would disappear, or dissolve.

TEACHER continues: In the first two lines, Hamlet is looking at his body - his solid body - and wishing it would melt, thaw, and turn to liquid, like a block of ice. What kind of figure of speech is this?

STUDENTS may identify it as a complex **metaphor**, comparing Hamlet's flesh to ice or another frozen substance.

TEACHER asks: What does he mean by this? Why does he want to melt away?

STUDENTS may guess that he feels frozen and wants to be able to unfreeze, that he's unable to cry and wants to be able to turn his frozen feelings to tears, or that he just wishes he would disappear. All of these answers are plausible, and all interesting.

TEACHER asks: Have you ever felt like that? How do you feel about Hamlet if these are his very first lines talking to you directly? Would anyone like to try to speak those two lines?

STUDENTS discuss, and try saying the lines, if they like.

TEACHER continues: How about the next two lines? What does Hamlet mean when he wishes the Everlasting had not set his canon against self-slaughter?

STUDENTS may need to look up words for this one - the "Everlasting" refers to God, and his "canon" would be the Catholic law against suicide.

TEACHER continues: So here, Hamlet tells us he's so depressed that he's considering suicide, only he's afraid to do it because it means he'd go to Hell. This is an important thing to know about Hamlet - throughout the play he struggles with the consequences of his Christian belief system.

Let's look at the next four and a half lines:

How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fie on't! ah, fie! 'Tis an unweeded garden
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature
Possess it merely.

Hamlet was talking about himself and his state of being for the first four lines, now he's talking about the world around him. What does Hamlet think of the world?

STUDENTS respond that he doesn't think much of it - it is a dull, miserable place. There's another metaphor here - Hamlet compares the world to an "unweeded garden" where "things rank and gross in nature" have grown.

TEACHER continues: Like Horatio, who very practically worries about politics and the threat of invasion, Hamlet is concerned about the state of the world around him. For him, however, it's more of a spiritual sickness. He knows something isn't right.

In the next lines, we find out what it is that's making the world so sick.

That it should come to this!
But two months dead! Nay, not so much, not two.
So excellent a king, that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly.

How long has it been since Hamlet's father's death?

STUDENTS respond that it has been less than two months, and she's already married his brother.

TEACHER asks: What does Hamlet think of Claudius in comparison to his father?

STUDENTS respond that he was an excellent king, that he was Hyperion, a sun-god, compared to Claudius, who is a satyr, a type of monster. King Hamlet loved Gertrude so much that he prevented the wind from brushing against her face too hard.

TEACHER continues: What kind of figures of speech are these? Do you think Hamlet might be exaggerating just a little?

STUDENTS may guess that this is **hyperbole** - exaggerated comparisons, larger-than-life assertions attempting to show how very different one man was from the other.

TEACHER asks: Have you ever used hyperbole to compare two people, or insult someone? Why do we use this figure of speech?

STUDENTS respond with ideas.

TEACHER continues: Let's look at the next section:

Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on; and yet, within a month-
Let me not think on't! Frailty, thy name is woman!-

Hamlet is still discussing the same subject. What does Shakespeare do to show us that even saying any of this out loud is hard for him?

STUDENTS suggest that there are a lot of curses and interjections throughout the speech - "Oh God! God!" "Fie on't!" "Heaven and earth!/Must I remember?" "Let

me not think on't!" These make Hamlet seem very human and realistic, and we can tell how upset he is.

TEACHER continues: He also seems to be speaking in one long run-on sentence, kind of like we do in real life. What does he mean "as if increase of appetite had grown/By what it fed on"?

STUDENTS suggest that the more she was with Hamlet's father, the more she loved him and wanted to be with him. They seemed to him to be deeply in love, which makes his shock so much worse that she now is married to someone else.

TEACHER continues: Did you notice that he's now decreased the time between the death and the marriage to only a month? Let's continue:

A little month, or ere those shoes were old
With which she followed my poor father's body
Like Niobe, all tears- why she, even she
(O God! a beast that wants discourse of reason
Would have mourn'd longer) married with my uncle;

There are more hyperboles here, as well as a **simile**, a comparison using "like" or "as". Can you identify them?

STUDENTS suggest:

Hyperbole: The Queen's funeral shoes weren't worn out yet before she married Claudius. (This may not even be hyperbole!) He also says that a dumb animal would have mourned longer than her, which may indeed be hyperbole.

Simile: The Queen is compared to Niobe, a mythological figure who wept forever for her children when they were killed by the gods.

TEACHER says: Hamlet continues on in the same vein - do you recognize another hyperbole here?

My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month,
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married.

STUDENTS respond: He says Claudius and his father have less in common than Hamlet and Hercules, meaning nothing in common at all - this could be hyperbole. He also says that there were still tears in her eyes from his father's death while she married - this is definitely a hyperbole.

TEACHER continues: Now that Hamlet has worked himself into quite a frenzy with his anger and exaggerations, he gets to the point of why this bothers him so much.

O, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets.
It is not, nor it cannot come to good.
But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

Aside from the short time between the death and the marriage, what bothers Hamlet about the relationship between his mother and Claudius?

STUDENTS respond: He considers it to be incestuous and sinful.

TEACHER continues: In Hamlet's religious worldview, even though Gertrude and Claudius are not related by blood, the relationship is inherently sinful, and will bring sickness to the state. No matter how much the two of them love each other, the relationship cannot succeed and must lead to further evils. This is an example of **foreshadowing** -- what do you think Shakespeare is telling us might happen next?

STUDENTS respond that Shakespeare is setting up the fact that more bad things are going to happen to Hamlet and to Denmark.

TEACHER continues: How does he conclude the speech? What action will he take?

STUDENTS respond that he won't take any action at all - his heart is breaking, but he can't speak about how he feels.

TEACHER concludes: As we go through the play, we'll take a look at all of Hamlet's major soliloquies and track his emotional state.

Step 3: The Polonius family (20 minutes).

TEACHER continues: In the next scene, rather than going straight to the battlements to show us Hamlet and Horatio waiting for the Ghost to appear, Shakespeare gives us a scene about another family in the Danish court, the family of Polonius, the King's advisor. As we discovered when we looked at the earlier versions of the Hamlet story, the Polonius family is an invention of Shakespeare's, non-existent in the earlier versions. Why do you think Shakespeare included this sub-plot?

STUDENTS give ideas - perhaps Shakespeare wanted to show two different families as comparison, two different young men in similar situations. Also, he establishes Ophelia as a sympathetic character rather than a nameless courtesan, as in other versions.

TEACHER continues: Let's talk about the relationships in this family, starting with Laertes and Ophelia. They're brother and sister. Let's read aloud lines 1-51. *NOTE: If time is limited, STUDENTS can divide up into three groups to discuss each section of this scene.*

Using the annotated text, STUDENTS take turns reading aloud. Pause to discuss the following as you read:

• Who does most of the talking? *Laertes - he seems to be the older sibling.*

• What is his main piece of advice for Ophelia? *Stop giving Hamlet your attention - he's clearly not serious about you.*

• What are some of his reasons for cautioning Ophelia? *Hamlet is a prince, and won't be able to choose his own bride. Also, even though he says he loves her, he may just be trying to seduce her.*

• How does Ophelia respond? *She agrees to be careful, but warns Laertes that he should be just as careful with his virtue as she is with hers.*

TEACHER continues: What is your impressions of Laertes after this exchange? How about Ophelia? How does this compare with your relationships with your own siblings?

STUDENTS share ideas.

TEACHER continues: The next section concerns the relationship between Laertes and his father, Polonius. Let's read lines 52-86 (up to Laertes' exit.)

STUDENTS read aloud from the next section, discussing the following:

• Who does most of the talking this time? *Polonius.*

• Does Laertes seem happy about this? Do you think he's being honest or sarcastic when he says "occasion smiles upon a second leave"? *This is open to interpretation, but it's commonly assumed that Laertes is exasperated by the wordy Polonius, and doesn't enjoy saying good-bye a second time.*

• What do you think of Polonius' advice? Is it good advice? *Despite Polonius' reputation as a foolish old man, much of his advice seems very sound.*

• What piece of advice do you think is the best? *Answers will vary.*

TEACHER continues: Finally, let's look at the relationship between Polonius and Ophelia, in lines 87 to the end of the scene.

STUDENTS read aloud, considering the following:

• How does Polonius' advice about Hamlet differ from Laertes'? *Laertes actually seemed to be giving advice, while Polonius is giving orders. Polonius seems more insulting, more demanding.*

• What seems to be the primary concern of both Polonius and Laertes? *They are both worried about Ophelia losing her honor (virginity), which would bring shame on the family.*

• What does Ophelia agree to do by the end of the scene? How do her responses to Polonius differ from her responses to Laertes? *Ophelia agrees not to see Hamlet any more. She was able to tease Laertes, answer him back more as an equal, and clearly she has to obey Polonius.*

TEACHER asks: We now have two families to compare - the royal family and the Polonius family. Which family would you rather be a part of? Which relationships seem the most poisonous, and which the most desirable?

STUDENTS offer ideas.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER concludes: The scene we just read pretty much concludes the exposition of the play. Tonight, you're going to read the next two scenes, in which Hamlet is given the task out of which the rest of the play develops.

Homework: Read I.iv-v. Think about ways in which the Ghost scene might be staged to allow for maximum impact. How do you think it was staged in Shakespeare's time?

Study question 1 (Grades 4-6): Write a speech giving advice to a sibling or friend.

Study question 2 (Grades 7-12): Write a short essay defending, or condemning, your favorite, or least favorite, piece of Polonius' advice to Laertes. Why do you think this is a good or bad piece of advice?

Day Six

Remember Me

Goal: To explore staging ideas. To identify rhetorical devices in Hamlet's second soliloquy, and his super-objective. To identify character traits of several of the major characters.

Words of the day:
rhetorical devices
repetition
parallel construction
alliteration
super-objective
objective
obstacle
character traits

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 4: 1.1, 1.2 (objectives, character)

Language Arts:
Grade 5: 3.3 (character motive)
Grade 6: 3.2 (character traits), 3.4 (repetition)
Grade 7: 3.3 (characterization)

Materials: Worksheet 5, movie clips of Ghost scene if desired.

Step 1: Review homework (5 minutes).

TEACHER begins by asking if there were questions or any confusion about the Ghost scenes.

TEACHER asks: Today, we're very used to ghosts being portrayed in various different ways on film - special effects allow us to make ghosts look white, or transparent, and their voices can be changed to sound echo-y. In Shakespeare's time, they didn't have access to any of these effects. How would you stage this scene if you had to do it on stage without any special effects? Think about ways you could make the Ghost's appearance surprising. How could you change the Ghost's voice to make it scary?

STUDENTS give ideas - perhaps trap-doors in the stage could be used, or the Ghost could speak at first without being seen. The Ghost could wear a frightening costume. Multiple actors could perform the Ghost's voice to allow for an echo-ing effect.

Step 2: Staging the Ghost scene (25 minutes).

TEACHER continues: Let's try out some of these ideas! Using your scripts, try to stage these scenes. You can choose to do both scenes or just parts of each one. Don't worry about performing Hamlet's soliloquy in I.v.

STUDENTS divide into groups of 4 actors, to play Hamlet, Horatio, Marcellus, and the Ghost. (The role of Hamlet could be shared if you need to have more than 4 in a group.)

TEACHER goes from group to group coaching for about 10-15 minutes. When everyone is ready, each group performs for the others, making sure to describe any costume or scenic ideas that might not be possible in your classroom. *NOTE: This may be a good time to use the edited Shakespeare on Tour script, available on line at www.sfshakes.org, rather than the full text.*

TEACHER asks: What ideas were the scariest and most effective?

STUDENTS discuss. If there's time, TEACHER may wish to share production photos from different stagings of *Hamlet* or film clips from various performances.

Step 3: Hamlet's super-objective (15 minutes).

TEACHER continues: Let's look at Hamlet's second soliloquy, around line 91 in scene v.

O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
And shall I couple hell? Hold, hold, my heart!
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past
That youth and observation copied there,
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter. Yes, by heaven!
O most pernicious woman!
O villain, villain, smiling, damned villain!

My tables! Meet it is I set it down
That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain;
At least I am sure it may be so in Denmark. [Writes.]
So, uncle, there you are. Now to my word:
It is 'Adieu, adieu! Remember me.'
I have sworn't.

This speech includes several common Shakespearean **rhetorical devices**. Can anyone give me a definition of rhetoric?

STUDENTS may know that rhetoric is the art of speech-making - ways of crafting a speech that make it emotionally resonant for an audience.

TEACHER continues: The most obvious rhetorical device in the speech is **repetition**. What phrases and words does Hamlet repeat?

hold
remember thee/me
villain
smile

Hamlet also uses a list of similarly worded phrases, when he says "all trivial fond records,/All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past" - this is called **parallel construction**. He uses **alliteration**, or the repeating of consonant sounds, on "Hold, hold, my heart!" Both of these are types of repetition. What is the effect of all this repetition?

STUDENTS respond with ideas - the speech returns to familiar phrases, making it memorable. The theme of the speech is to remember the Ghost's words - Hamlet is trying to make himself remember, and in turn the rhetoric in the speech helps the audience remember his promise.

TEACHER continues: Think back to Hamlet's first soliloquy. How has his mood changed?

STUDENTS suggest that while he was depressed and angry and unable to do anything about it in the first soliloquy, this soliloquy suggests a course of action - revenge. Hamlet even writes down in his "tables" - perhaps a notebook - what he has experienced so that he will follow through. He is still very angry, but now his anger is directed against his uncle and not his mother.

TEACHER continues: With this scene, Shakespeare establishes Hamlet's overall goal for the play. Can anyone tell me what that might be?

STUDENTS respond that he has sworn to remember the Ghost and avenge his father's death.

TEACHER continues: We call this overall goal the character's "**super-objective**." This is the major thing the character wants over the course of the play. Each character has one of these for the whole play. However, they'll also have smaller **objectives** to achieve in each scene. In the following exchange with Horatio and Marcellus, what is Hamlet's objective?

STUDENTS guess that he wants them to promise not to tell anyone about the Ghost.

TEACHER continues: Hamlet is starting to get ideas about how he might go about achieving his objective. What does he mean when he says "As I perchance hereafter shall think meet/To put an antic disposition on"?

STUDENTS guess that Hamlet may act like he's crazy, and Horatio and Marcellus are not supposed to reveal that they know better.

Step 4: Character traits (10 minutes).

TEACHER passes out Worksheet 5 and continues: At this point, we've met most of the major characters in the play. Let's start to identify some of their **character traits**, and if we can, their super-objectives.

TEACHER writes some major characters on the board and gets ideas from the STUDENTS about their character traits, per the worksheet and teacher's key.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER concludes: As we continue to read, we'll fill in more of the character's super-objectives. We'll also start to identify the **obstacles** in the way of each character achieving his or her objectives.

Homework: Read Act II, scenes i-ii. Identify the objectives of each character. Take a look at Hamlet's third major soliloquy, at the end of scene ii, beginning "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I!" How does this speech start to reveal Hamlet's obstacles? What does it say about Hamlet's character?

Study Question 1 (Grades 9-12): Research Constantin Stanislavsky. When did he live? What was his contribution to the theatre? Describe some of his major ideas, including ideas about objectives, tactics, and obstacles.

Study Question 2 (Grades 4-8): Pick a book or movie that you're very familiar with and describe three or four main characters' super-objectives in one sentence apiece. For example, "Harry Potter's super-objective is to save the world from Voldemort."

Worksheet 5

	Character Traits	Super-Objective	Obstacles
Hamlet			
Claudius			
Gertrude			
Polonius			
Ophelia			
Laertes			
Horatio			
Ghost			

Worksheet 5 (teacher's key)

Answers will vary - here are suggestions:

	Character Traits	Super-Objective	Obstacles
Hamlet	depressed, angry	to avenge his father	his own inability to act; Claudius
Claudius	devious, political	to avoid discovery	Hamlet
Gertrude	loving, easily influenced	to unite her family	Hamlet's anger
Polonius	bossy, interfering, wordy	to control his world	Hamlet; his daughter's love for Hamlet
Ophelia	meek, obedient, innocent	to please others	Her conflicting loves for Hamlet and her family
Laertes	bold, proud	to make order of chaos	Hamlet's influence; Claudius' deeds
Horatio	logical, loyal	to support Hamlet	Claudius; Hamlet's own inconsistency
Ghost	proud, angry	to be avenged	Hamlet's indecisiveness

Day Seven

Meddling and Mischief

Goal: To identify tactics used to achieve an objective. To further identify figures of speech in Hamlet's speeches.

Words of the Day:
tactics
prose
antithesis
rhyming couplet

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grades 9-12: 2.1 (acting choices)

Language Arts:
Grade 8: 3.1 (rhyming couplets)

Materials: Worksheet 6

Step 1: Review homework (15 minutes).

TEACHER asks students to present their ideas about the characters' objectives from the Act II scenes they read the night before.

Act II, scene i:

- Polonius' objective: In the first section, with the spy Reynaldo, his objective is to discover what his son is up to in Paris. He wants to make sure Laertes is studying and not partying. Once Reynaldo leaves and Ophelia enters, Polonius wants to discover what has disturbed Ophelia, then convince the King that Hamlet is mad from rejected love.

- Reynaldo's objective: He wants to figure out how to best serve his master, since Polonius' instructions are sometimes confusing.

- Ophelia's objective: She seems genuinely concerned about Hamlet and wants to help him by reporting his condition to her father.

TEACHER asks: What else did we learn about both Polonius and Ophelia in this scene? What do you think of the way Polonius treats his children?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. They may want to add to their character descriptions on Worksheet 5.

Act II, scene ii:

• Claudius' objective: Overall, he wants to discover the reason for Hamlet's melancholy. He may be concerned that Hamlet suspects him of his father's murder.

• Gertrude's objective: Her goals are similar to Claudius', but instead of self-preservation, she is genuinely concerned for her son.

• Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's objectives: The two characters are very vaguely drawn and pretty much interchangeable. They seem to primarily want to serve the King and Queen, and may also be concerned about Hamlet. Their loyalty to the King, however, seems to outweigh any loyalty to Hamlet, since they first try to lie to him about their reason for being at Elsinore.

• Voltemand and Cornelius' objectives: They want to reassure the King that the danger from Norway is past, and young Fortinbras plans to invade Norway instead.

• Polonius' objective: As in the previous scene, Polonius wants to persuade the King and Queen that Hamlet's madness is a result of Ophelia rejecting his advances. He also wants to outwit Hamlet, but is unable to keep up with him.

• Hamlet's objective: He seems mostly concerned with keeping everyone confused as to his state of mind. He plays the madman for Polonius, and the philosopher for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, revealing nothing of his plans for revenge to any of them. When the Players arrive, his objective changes - he wants to get them to perform a play that offer proof of the King's guilt.

• The Players' objectives: They obviously know Hamlet from earlier visits and want to please him - they seem to be very good friends.

Step 2: Tactics (20 minutes).

TEACHER continues: If you were the actors playing these roles, knowing the objectives would be very important. Everything you did within the scene, all your gestures and lines, would be geared toward trying to achieve your objectives. You might try a number of different things in order to achieve that objective. These are called **tactics**.

What are some of the tactics Hamlet uses to persuade others that he is mad?

STUDENTS guess that he dresses strangely, according to Ophelia's description. He also acts strangely towards Ophelia, shaking her and refusing to speak to her. He also says confusing things to Polonius, saying that he is a fishmonger and making fun of him in the way that a court jester might. He also makes sure that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern know he is depressed and dissatisfied with the world. Throughout, he speaks in a witty, clownish way - using "an antic disposition."

TEACHER continues: We're going to play a game to illustrate how different tactics can be used to achieve an objective.

TEACHER divides STUDENTS into pairs. One of each pair stands on one side of the room across from the other. There should be some distance between the partners.

Step One: Using just the words "Come here", one partner should get the other to come to him/her. So that partner's objective should be to get the other person to come to him/her. The other partner's objective should be to come to their partner if they feel honestly persuaded.

Some students may decide not to come just to be difficult, so if the TEACHER feels that anyone is not letting him/herself be persuaded, s/he should intervene.

Let both partners have a chance to say "Come here."

Step Two: Using just the words "Go Away," each partner should convince the other to go back to the other side of the room.

STUDENTS should find that different tactics are effective: If yelling at their partners doesn't work, try whispering. If jumping happily up and down doesn't work, try crying. The main thing is to commit to the tactic and try something else if it's not working.

TEACHER concludes: Just like Hamlet, you've just played a scene where you had to try a lot of different things to get what you want. This is the basis of all good theatre, this simple little exercise you just did. When you really want something on stage and can make your partner believe it, the audience believes you too.

Step 3: Hamlet's speeches (20 minutes).

TEACHER continues: Act II, scene ii contains two famous speeches of Hamlet's, one his speech to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the second his third great soliloquy, which you looked at as part of the homework last night. Let's look at the first speech first, beginning around line 292 with "I will tell you why."

I will tell you why. So shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your

secrecy to the King and Queen moult no feather. I have of late- but wherefore I know not- lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed, it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire- why, it appeareth no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals! And yet to me what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me- no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

What has just happened between him and his childhood friends?

STUDENTS answer that they have lied to him, claiming they were not sent for, then when Hamlet catches them in the lie, they admit that the King and Queen did send for them.

TEACHER continues: Hamlet responds by giving them the reasons why he is acting so strangely - the reasons for his melancholy. Of course, he doesn't give them his real reason, his super-objective.

What makes this speech immediately different from the soliloqiues we've studied so far?

STUDENTS may notice that it's in **prose**, not verse.

TEACHER continues: Can you identify examples of metaphors, similes, and other descriptive language in the speech?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. There are many:

The earth: a goodly frame/a sterile promontory
The air: a majestical roof, a brave o'erhanging firmament/a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.
A man: like an angel, like a god, beauty of the world, paragon of animals/quintessence of dust.

TEACHER asks: What do you notice about these descriptions?

STUDENTS may notice that Hamlet begins by describing these things very positively, very nobly, making them sound majestic and wonderful, then cuts them down and describes them as dull or unpleasant.

TEACHER continues: This is an example of **antithesis**, another common rhetorical device used by Shakespeare. This antithesis sets up two opposite ideas about

the same thing, using them to contrast Hamlet's experience with the rest of humanity's.

How would you use this device to help you when acting this speech?

STUDENTS suggest that you could speak the positive, flattering descriptions in a different way than the negative ones, to draw attention to the contrast. TEACHER may ask a volunteer to read the speech aloud, emphasizing the antitheses.

TEACHER continues: Let's break into small groups and look at the soliloquy beginning "O, what a rogue and peasant slave am I." Be prepared to share with the group Hamlet's obstacles as revealed in the speech, any new character traits that you noticed, and at least two rhetorical devices or figures of speech.

STUDENTS discuss in groups. After about 5 minutes, the whole group gathers to share their experiences. Some ideas might be:

Obstacle: Hamlet is disappointed in his own inability to act. He seems unable to actually perform his revenge, constantly procrastinating even though he has, by his own admission, every reason to seek revenge.

Character traits: Self-doubt, self-hatred, insecurity.

Rhetorical devices/figures of speech (a few examples):
Alliteration, also a reversal or parallel construction - "Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba"
Hyperbole - "drown the stage with tears, etc."
Alliteration - "muddy-mettled," "damn'd defeat"
Metaphor - "pigeon-liver'd"

TEACHER asks: How does the speech end?

STUDENTS may have noticed that there is a **rhyming couplet**, or two lines that end with the same rhyming sound, at the end of the speech. Shakespeare commonly ends acts or scenes with a rhyming couplet.

TEACHER asks: What happens in the middle of the speech, after "Fie upon't, foh!"

STUDENTS may notice that there is a transition in Hamlet's thoughts - he goes from beating himself up for being unable to act to coming up with an action - he will get the Players to do a play that will prove his uncle's guilt. Suddenly he seems to need more proof than the Ghost's report, even though he seemed convinced before.

TEACHER asks: Do you think Hamlet really needs more convincing, or is he just procrastinating? If so, why do you think he's procrastinating?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. Of course, there are no right answers here - this is the central mystery of *Hamlet*!

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER passes out Worksheet 6 and concludes: The scene you'll read tonight, Act III, scene i, contains Hamlet's fourth soliloquy, probably the most famous speech Shakespeare ever wrote. After you read the speech, look at Worksheet 6, which is a transcript of the speech as it appears in the first folio. Write down 4 major differences between the version we're using and the folio version. Why do you think the editor made the changes? Which version do you think is more helpful to an actor playing the role?

Homework: Read III.i and Worksheet 6 as above.

Study Question 1 (Grades 9-12): Write your own speech using one of the rhetorical devices studied in class.

Activity 1 (All grade levels): The whole class gathers at one side of the room and tries to get to the other side (objective). The obstacle is that no one can use the same tactic as anyone else. So if the first person walks, the next person has to crawl, run, hop, etc. See how many times you can go back and forth without repeating tactics.

Worksheet 6

to be or not to be

To be, or not to be, that is the Question:
Whether ‘tis Nobler in the minde to suffer
The Slings and Arrowes of outragious Fortune;
Or to take Armes against a Sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them: To dye, to sleepe
No more; and by a sleepe, to say we end
The Heart-ake, and the thousand Naturall shockes
That Flesh is heyre too? ‘Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish’d. To dye to sleepe,
To sleepe, perchance to Dreame; I, there’s the rub,
For in that sleepe of death, what dreames may come,
When we have shufflel’d off this mortall coile,
Must give us pawse. There’s the respect
That makes Calamity of so long life:
For who would beare the Whips and Scornes of time,
The Oppressors wrong, the poore mans Contumely,
The pangs of dispriz’d Love, the Lawes delay,
The insolence of Office, and the Spurnes
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himselfe might his *Quietus* make
With a bare Bodkin? Who would these Fardles beare
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover’d Countrey, from whose Borne
No Traveller returnes, Puzels the will,
And makes us rather beare those illes we have,
Then flye to others that we know not of.
Thus Conscience does make Cowards of us all,
And thus the Native hew of Resolution
Is sicklied o’re, with the pale cast of Thought,
And enterprizes of great pith and moment,
With this regard their Currants turne away,
And loose the name of Action. Soft you now,
The faire *Ophelia*? Nimph, in thy Orizons
Be all my sinnes remembred.

Worksheet 6 (teacher's key)

to be or not to be

To be, or not to be, that is the Question:
Whether 'tis Nobler in the **minde** to suffer
The Slings and **Arrowes** of **outragious** Fortune;
Or to take **Armes** against a Sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them: To **dye**, to **sleepe**
No more; and by a sleepe, to say we end
The **Heart-ake**, and the thousand **Naturall shockes**
That Flesh is **heyre too**? 'Tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To dye to sleepe,
To sleepe, perchance to **Dreame**; **I**, there's the rub,
For in that sleepe of death, what dreames may come,
When we have **shufflel'd** off this **mortall coile**,
Must give us **pawse**. There's the respect
That makes Calamity of so long life:
For who would **beare** the Whips and **Scornes** of time,
The Oppressors wrong, the **poore** mans Contumely,
The pangs of **dispriz'd** Love, the **Lawes** delay,
The insolence of Office, and the **Spurnes**
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he **himselfe** might his *Quietus* make
With a bare Bodkin? Who would **these Fardles** beare
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscover'd **Countrey**, from whose **Borne**
No Traveller **returnes**, **Puzels** the will,
And makes us rather beare those **illes** we have,
Then flye to others that we know not of.
Thus Conscience does make Cowards of us all,
And thus the Native **hew** of Resolution
Is sicklied **o're**, with the pale cast of Thought,
And **enterprizes** of great pith and moment,
With this regard their **Currants turne away**,
And loose the name of Action. Soft you now,
The faire *Ophelia*? **Nimph**, in thy **Orizons**
Be all my **sinnes remembred**.

Major differences:

Capitalization - Editors usually make all words lower-case except proper nouns and those at the beginnings of lines.

Punctuation - Commas may be removed; periods, dashes and exclamation points

substituted for colons and semi-colons.

Specific word differences - These are bolded above, and usually based on the Second Quarto, long considered the most reliable source.

Spelling changes - The spelling of some words has changed over time, and editors usually substitute the modern spelling. These are also bolded above.

Day Eight

Folio Discoveries

Goal: To compare and contrast original texts with modern editions. To learn how to use original texts to make acting choices.

Words of the Day:
courtier
theme
quarto
folio

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 5: 2.1 (themes)
Grade 7: 4.2 (cultural context)
Grade 8: 1.2 (themes)

Language Arts:
Grade 5: 2.3 (main ideas), 3.4 (themes)
Grade 6: 3.6 (themes)
Grade 7: 3.4 (themes)
Grades 11-12: 3.2 (themes and meanings), 3.7 (historical period)

Materials: Worksheet 6 (from previous day)

Step 1: Review homework (10 minutes).

TEACHER begins: First, let's review what happened in the scene you read last night.

STUDENTS respond that Polonius and Claudius spied on Hamlet while he spoke to Ophelia.

TEACHER asks: Do you think Hamlet knew he was being spied on? How do you think he really feels about Ophelia?

STUDENTS will have different interpretations, since there are no right answers to these questions. Some may think the line "Where's your father?" and the following responses mean that Hamlet knows Polonius can hear him, others may feel otherwise. Some may think Hamlet really loves Ophelia but is hurt because she's trying to break up with him. Others may think he is telling the truth, and he never

cared about her.

TEACHER asks: What does Ophelia's speech tell us about Hamlet's character, or at least the way he behaved before his father's death?

STUDENTS respond that he had many desirable qualities, such as:

- A noble mind
- A courtier's eye (observant, tasteful)
- A scholar's tongue (well-spoken)
- A soldier's sword (brave, skilled with weapons)
- The expectation and rose of the state (a much-respected future King)
- The glass of fashion (well-dressed and well-behaved)
- The mould of form (behaving appropriately for a courtier)
- The observed of all observers (The most honored of all courtiers)
- Expressing his love in "music vows" (a poetic lover)
- Possessing "noble and sovereign reason" (not at all mad, in command of his wits)
- Unmatched form and feature of blown youth (handsome, in the prime of youth)

TEACHER continues: Ophelia's speech reveals that Hamlet once possessed all the qualities of an ideal **courtier**. The appropriate behavior for a courtier, or nobleman, was a subject much discussed in Renaissance Europe. How is Hamlet behaving now, in comparison?

STUDENTS respond that he acts unpredictably, he has bad manners, he dresses all in black or sloppily, as Ophelia describes earlier, etc.

TEACHER continues: Many scholars believe that one of the **themes** of this play is the way that young men should behave. Hamlet's behavior is contrasted with that of Prince Fortinbras of Norway and Laertes. Polonius has already advised Laertes on appropriate behavior for a young courtier.

Based on what we've read so far, what do you think some of the other themes, or main ideas, of the play might be?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. Procrastination and inaction might be one theme, or the difficulty of revenge. Fear of the afterlife is another possible theme. How the behavior of individuals affects the greater society is another theme.

TEACHER continues: As we continue to explore the play, think about Shakespeare's opinion of the right way for a courtier to behave. Which of the three young men in the play does Shakespeare think behaves appropriately, if any?

Step 3: The First Folio (20 minutes).

TEACHER continues: You also took a look at the First Folio version of the famous “To be or not to be” speech. What differences did you notice between this version and the edited version we’ve been reading in class?

STUDENTS respond with ideas, per the Teacher’s Key, regarding capitalization, punctuation, spelling, and word choices.

TEACHER asks: Which version did you find easier to read? Which version helped you understand the meaning of the speech more?

STUDENTS respond with opinions. They may prefer the modern version’s easier spelling and punctuation, or the First Folio’s interesting capitalizations and word choices.

TEACHER continues: If you were an actor performing the role of Hamlet, which text would you like to use? Why?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. They may like the fact that the Folio version capitalizes important words, giving the actor an idea of which words are most important. It also has more commas, allowing the actor to breathe more often and break down the text into more manageable phrases.

TEACHER continues: As I mentioned, the version of the speech on Worksheet 6 came from the First Folio, which was published in 1623 after Shakespeare’s death by two of his friends from his acting company, the King’s Men. In general, the First Folio is considered to be the most accurate record of the plays as they were actually performed. In the case of *Hamlet*, however, two other versions of the play were published during Shakespeare’s lifetime. The first is called the First Quarto of 1603, or often the Bad Quarto. This was a pirated version published by one of the actors in the play, probably the man who played Marcellus. It is much shorter than the First Folio *Hamlet*, and includes some things that don’t appear in later versions, including text probably borrowed from other plays.

The Second Quarto, published in 1604, was a version authorized by Shakespeare. This is often considered by editors to be the definitive version of the play, since it appeared during Shakespeare’s lifetime and includes about 200 more lines than the Folio version. The version of the play that we’ve been using in class is likely based primarily on the Second Quarto, with a few changes based on the Folio.

The Folio includes about 85 lines that are different from the Second Quarto, as well as many small word changes, a few of which are in this speech.

By looking at the original texts of the play, we can make our own decisions about the editors’ choices. If you were directing this play or playing this role, why might

you want to be able to do that?

STUDENTS answer that you might prefer different word choices than the version of the play you are using. Different versions of the text might better support ideas you have about the character.

TEACHER continues: Punctuation choices are also important - many editors substitute exclamation points for the question marks that appear in the original text. Observing the original Folio punctuation makes Hamlet seem more questioning, more uncertain. In the Folio text, there are very few exclamation points, so when one is used, it might imply that the character is very excited.

Step 4: To be or not to be (25 minutes)

TEACHER asks for a volunteer to stand and read all the capitalized words in the First Folio speech, excluding the first word in every line or sentence, aloud. It should sound like this:

Question
Nobler
Slings, Arrowes, Fortune
Armes, Sea
Heart-ake, Naturall
Flesh
Dreame
Calamity
Whips, Scornes
Oppressors, Contumely
Love, Lawes
Office, Spurnes
Quietus
Bodkin, Fardles
Countrey, Borne
Traveller, Puzels
Conscience, Cowards
Native, Resolution
Thought
Currants
Action
Ophelia, Nimph, Orizons

TEACHER asks: What do you notice about these capitalized words?

STUDENTS will have various ideas - they are important words, many of them are multi-syllabic and represent concepts or ideas, or strong metaphors. TEACHER should point out that the first capitalized word in the main body of the speech is

"Question" while the last is "Action" (before Hamlet's attention is distracted by Ophelia.) These words represent the basic conundrum of Hamlet's personality - he has so many questions, he is unable to take action.

TEACHER continues: Let's use clues given to us by the Folio capitalization and punctuation to discover how to best express the ideas in this speech.

TEACHER divides class up into pairs or small groups to work with the following sections of the speech:

1. Lines 1-5: "To be... end them"
2. Lines 5-9: "To dye... to be wish'd"
3. Lines 9-13: "To dye... give us pawse"
4. Lines 13-17: "There's the respect... Lawes delay"
5. Lines 18-21: "The insolence... bare Bodkin"
6. Lines 21-25: "Who would these... Puzels the will"
7. Lines 26-30: "And makes us... cast of Thought"
8. Lines 31-35: "And enterprizes... remembred."

Each group should come up with a theatrical presentation of their lines, considering the following:

- All the words in the speech should be used.
- Consider highlighting the capitalized words in some way.
- Punctuation should be strongly observed - pauses for commas, intonation for question marks and exclamation points.
- All of the above should contribute to a greater understanding of the themes as presented in the lines.

STUDENTS work on their own for 10-15 minutes, then re-join the group to present their lines.

TEACHER asks: Did seeing the lines performed help you to understand the ideas of the speech? What words or ideas in particular stayed with you?

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER asks: What is Hamlet's state of mind now, as demonstrated by the speech we just looked at?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. He doesn't mention his revenge or his father's death specifically at all this time, or his anger at his uncle and mother. Instead he seems to be contemplating suicide, and his own cowardice regarding action, in a broader sense.

TEACHER concludes: As you read the next scene, notice in particular Hamlet's advice to the Players at the very beginning of the scene. Write a list of acting tips based on Hamlet's advice.

Homework: Read III.ii, listing Hamlet's acting tips for the Players.

Study Question 1 (Grades 11-12): If you can, get a First Folio version of another scene or speech from *Hamlet* (Applause publishes the whole First Folio text in an easy-to-read modern typography). Make a note of any changes between this version and the edited version you're using in class. If you were the editor, would you have made the same changes? What do you find useful about the Folio version?

Activity 1 (all grade levels): Improvise a very short soliloquy in which you try to figure out all the aspects of a problem and make a decision. Start with one of the following situations:

1. You are baby-sitting and your friend wants to come over and visit, when your employers have said you can have no guests.
2. You find a wallet in the street with $100 in it and no identification.
3. You accidentally overhear one friend say s/he is going to play a trick on another friend.
4. You are along at home and hear a strange noise outside.

Think of at least two different things you can do in the situation and think out loud until you have chosen one.

Day nine

the mousetrap

Goal: To use Hamlet's advice to the Players to help make strong, realistic acting choices. To learn about the role of status in Elizabethan society.

Words of the Day:
enunciation
patron
status

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 7: 4.2 (cultural context)

Language Arts:
Grades 9-10: 3.12 (historical period)
Grades 11-12: 3.7 (historical period)

Materials: Worksheet 7, Deck of cards

Step 1: Review homework (15 minutes).

TEACHER begins by asking STUDENTS to summarize the events of III.ii.

STUDENTS respond: Hamlet gives the Players some advice about how to perform the play they are about to present to the court. He takes his place to watch, teasing Ophelia in a much different way than in the previous scene. The Players present the story of the murder of Gonzago. When the murderer kills Gonzago in the exact way Claudius killed Hamlet's father, Claudius demands that the play end immediately, and rushes out. Hamlet takes this as proof of his guilt. He celebrates with Horatio, then accuses Rosencrantz and Guildenstern of being liars and spying for the King.

TEACHER asks STUDENTS to share their lists of advice for the Players, and put it into their own words:

1. Speak the speech trippingly on the tongue, not mouthing it like the town crier. *This means to use good **enunciation**, pronouncing each word carefully, not just shouting like a town crier would.*

2. Do not saw the air with your hand, but use gentle, temperate gestures. *Don't*

make huge, unrealistic gestures, but believable, smaller ones.

3. Don't tear a passion to tatters, spleeting the ears of the groundlings. D*on't overact and show too much emotion, yelling so that the people closest to the stage have to hold their ears.*

4. Don't be too tame neither. *Don't be unemotional and boring.*

5. Let your discretion be your tutor. *Do what comes naturally.*

6. Suit the action to the word, the word to the action. *Your movement and gestures should be appropriate for the lines you are speaking.*

7. O'erstep not the modesty of nature. *Try to be natural and realistic.*

8. The purpose of playing is to hold the mirror up to nature. *Make sure you show the audience something they can identify as real.*

9. Show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure. *Let the audience identify their own emotions and selves in your performance.*

10. If your acting is o'erdone or comes tardy off, it make make the unskillful laugh, but will make the judicious grieve. *Even though overacting and bad timing can make the stupider members of the audience laugh, it will disappoint the more educated people.*

11. You must consider the censure of the judicious more than a whole theatre of others. *You must play to those of the highest intelligence rather than play down to the masses.*

12. Like some players I've seen, don't strut and bellow and imitate humanity abominably. *Again, don't act unrealistically, shouting and posing and acting larger-than-life.*

13. Let those that play your clowns speak no more than that is set down for them, in order to make some spectators laugh, though some question of the play be then to be considered. *Don't let your comic characters make up lines and jokes that aren't in the script just to make people laugh, since that distracts from the themes of the play.*

14. This behavior is villainous, and shows the fool to have a most pitiful ambition. *Clowns who improvise inappropriately are trying to promote themselves at the expense of the rest of the play.*

TEACHER asks: What do you think of Hamlet's advice? Do you agree with it? Have you seen plays or movies where some of the actors didn't follow this advice?

STUDENTS share ideas.

Step 2: Staging *The Mousetrap* (25 minutes).

TEACHER passes out Worksheet 7 and continues: We're going to use Hamlet's advice to present *The Mousetrap*, the play the Players perform for the court.

TEACHER divides class into groups of 3-4, and continues: Half of you are going to try to present the scene doing everything Hamlet says NOT to do. The other half of the groups should present the scene doing your best to follow Hamlet's instructions.

STUDENTS rehearse their scenes for 10-15 minutes, then present them to the class.

TEACHER asks: Which scenes were funnier? Which were more realistic? Which would you pay money to see? What do you think about Hamlet's advice based on your experience working on these scenes?

Step 3: A status game (15 minutes).

TEACHER continues: Hamlet is not a player himself, but the Players seem to respect his ideas and advice. Why do you think that is?

STUDENTS answer that he has good ideas, but they may also note that he is a Prince, and therefore it's in the best interest of the Players to pay attention to what he has to say.

TEACHER continues: As a Prince, Hamlet would be able to give them money and publicity. Players in Shakespeare's time relied on the nobility to sponsor their companies. The nobles who did this were called **patrons**. We still use this term today to refer to people who donate money to arts organizations - they are often called patrons of the arts.

As a potential patron, Hamlet has a higher **status** than the Players. Status was very important in Shakespeare's time. The idea that all people were created equal had not yet surfaced. Generally, it was understood that some people were destined to be more powerful and important than others. This is why Claudius is able to end the play without anyone arguing, why Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have to endure Hamlet's insults without complaining, and why Ophelia is powerless to answer back to her father or to Hamlet.

TEACHER passes out a stack of playing cards, preferably a mix of high and low cards from various suits, with more than one of each number.

TEACHER asks students to hold their cards face up on their foreheads without looking at them themselves. S/he continues: The very highest status is the king, then the queen, then the jack. The middle numbers would be middle-class people, like Shakespeare himself, merchants, and artisans. Threes, fours, and fives might be servants, while aces and twos would be outcasts such as beggars and people with contagious diseases.

STUDENTS move around the room silently, looking at each other's cards. If they see a high status person, they bow, offer chairs, etc. If they see a low status person, they turn away, ignore them, etc. Try it first silently, then with words. TEACHER stresses that when using words, it's important not to tell others what cards they have on their foreheads. Physical contact should be avoided, since it tends to lead to pushing and shoving!

As STUDENTS start to figure out who they are, they may start to behave accordingly. After about five minutes, STUDENTS try to line themselves up in order of status, based on how others reacted to them, still not looking at their cards.

TEACHER goes down the line and asks each person what card s/he thinks s/he has. After guessing, the student looks at his/her card to see how accurately s/he guessed.

TEACHER collects cards. STUDENTS take their seats and discuss the exercise. How did they know their status? How did everyone's body language change as they began to guess their status? How did you feel if you were low status? How did you feel if you were high status? How about if you were in the middle?

TEACHER continues: If you had to assign a playing card to each character in this play, how would you do it? Here are some ideas:

King Claudius -- King

Queen Gertrude -- Queen, although arguable as a woman she might be lower.

Prince Hamlet, Prince Fortinbras -- Jacks

Polonius -- As a trusted advisor of the King, he'd be as high as possible without being royalty himself - like a Ten.

Laertes, Horatio, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern -- As younger men of the nobility, they might be Eights or Nines.

Voltemand, Cornelius -- As ambassadors, they are high-ranking courtiers, and might be Nines.

Ophelia -- As a young noblewoman, she'd be lower in rank than the men, like a

Six or Seven.

Marcellus, Bernardo, Reynaldo -- They seem lower-ranking than the ambassadors, probably Fives, Sixes, or Sevens.

Osric, Messengers -- Lower-ranking servants, Four or Five

Players -- Players were not considered to be gentlemen, so they would rank around Four or Five.

Gravediggers -- This was a very lowly profession; they might be Twos or Threes.

If there's time, try the game again with slips of paper with the characters' names on them. STUDENTS should try to guess which character they're playing. You can try this silently or with some words allowed, as long as they're not actually using the characters' names.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER concludes: As you read the next scenes, think about how the status of the characters affects the ways they interact.

Homework: Read Act III, scenes iii and iv.

Study Question 1 (Grades 6-12): Status may not be as obvious to us today as it was to the Elizabethans, but it still exists in modern American society. Who do you think has the highest status in today's culture? Who has the lowest? What status do you think you have, and why?

Study Question 2 (Grades 9-12): Why do you think Shakespeare included the advice to the Players scene? What does this speech tell us about Hamlet? What does it have to do with the themes of the play?

WORKSHEET 7

THE MOUSETRAP

Player King. Full thirty times hath Phoebus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite comutual in most sacred bands.

Player Queen. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done!
But woe is me! you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer and from your former state.
That I distrust you. Yet, though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my lord, it nothing must;
For women's fear and love holds quantity,
In neither aught, or in extremity.

Player King. Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too;
My operant powers their functions leave to do.
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, belov'd, and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou-

Player Queen. O, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast.
When second husband let me be accurst!
None wed the second but who killed the first.

Player King. I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine oft we break.
So think thou wilt no second husband wed;
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

Player Queen. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light,
Sport and repose lock from me day and night,
To desperation turn my trust and hope,
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope,
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy,
Both here and hence pursue me lasting strife,
If, once a widow, ever I be wife!

Player King. ‘Tis deeply sworn. Sweet, leave me here awhile.
My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep.

Lies down.

Player Queen. Sleep rock thy brain,
And never come mischance between us twain!

Exit. Enter Lucianus.

Lucianus. Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing;
Confederate season, else no creature seeing;
Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,
With Hecate’s ban thrice blasted, thrice infected,
Thy natural magic and dire property
On wholesome life usurp immediately.

Pours poison in King’s ear.

Day Ten

Mad as the Sea and Wind

Goal: To learn about the Elizabethans' concept of humors and how they can help us understand character.

Words of the Day:
humors
choleric
sanguine
melancholy
phlegmatic

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 7: 4.2 (cultural context)

Language Arts:
Grades 9-10: 3.12 (historical period)
Grades 11-12: 3.7 (historical period)

Materials: None.

Step 1: Review the homework (15 minutes).

TEACHER starts by asking: Think back to the plot points we discussed when we first started working on this play. We're now in the very middle of the play, Act III. Where do you think we are in the plot?

STUDENTS may guess that we're at the crisis point - Hamlet has proof of the King's guilt, the King knows now that Hamlet suspects him, and Hamlet has to act now or be exiled to England.

TEACHER asks: Up to this point in the play, it's possible to imagine that Claudius might be innocent, and the Ghost lying. How do we know that Claudius is guilty?

STUDENTS answer that he confesses his guilt in a soliloquy.

TEACHER continues: In III.iii, Hamlet has the perfect opportunity to kill Claudius. Why does he decide not to do it? Let's look at the soliloquy at the end of this scene.

Now might I do it pat, now he is praying;

And now I'll do't.

At this point in the speech, Hamlet seems ready. If you were a director staging this scene, how would you show this?

STUDENTS respond that you could have Hamlet pull his sword, ready to stab Claudius.

TEACHER continues: Then, in the middle of the line, Hamlet interrupts himself:

And so he goes to heaven,
And so am I reveng'd. That would be scann'd.
A villain kills my father; and for that,
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.

Why does Hamlet believe he'd be sending Claudius to heaven?

STUDENTS respond that in Hamlet's Catholic belief system, if someone prays for forgiveness right before they die, they go to heaven. Hamlet sees Claudius praying, and worries that by killing him now, he'd be sending his soul to heaven.

Why, this is hire and salary, not revenge!
He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
And how his audit stands, who knows save heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him;

In contrast, what does Hamlet believe happened to his father's soul?

STUDENTS guess that because Claudius killed him before he'd had a chance to be absolved of his sins, his soul didn't go straight to heaven, and that's why he's a ghost. If there are Catholics in the class, they may know that Hamlet believes his father is now in Purgatory, earning the right to enter heaven.

and am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?
No.

Does Hamlet believe he'd be getting true revenge on Claudius by killing him now?

STUDENTS answer that no, Hamlet thinks he'd be doing him a favor!

Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent.

When he is drunk asleep; or in his rage;
Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At gaming, swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't-
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes.

When is Hamlet hoping to kill Claudius?

STUDENTS respond that he wants to catch him doing something sinful, so that he'll be sure to go to hell.

TEACHER continues:

My mother stays.
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

Hamlet ends the soliloquy with a rhyming couplet. What do you think - do you believe Hamlet really will find another time to kill Claudius? Or do you think the whole speech is just an excuse?

STUDENTS share ideas.

TEACHER continues: Without going through and scanning the whole speech, do you notice any unusual lines?

STUDENTS point out two very short lines - "To heaven" and "No."

TEACHER asks: Why do you think these lines are so short? What might Hamlet be doing during all those extra beats?

STUDENTS respond with ideas - perhaps he is thinking, perhaps there is stage movement showing him moving away from Claudius, putting away his sword, etc.

TEACHER continues: Think back to when we talked about objectives and obstacles. Is Claudius Hamlet's obstacle in avenging his father? If not, what is?

STUDENTS answer that in this case, Hamlet's obstacle is himself. Claudius doesn't know he's there and is defenseless. Hamlet doesn't do what he's supposed to do because he talks himself out of it.

TEACHER asks: What do you think of Hamlet's personality? Does he remind you of anyone you know?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. Now is a good time to review Worksheet 5, adding to it with more ideas.

Step 2: Elizabethan Humors (15 minutes).

TEACHER continues: Hamlet is frequently called “the melancholy Dane.” The Elizabethans believed that different bodily fluids governed different personality types. If you had an excess of a particular type of fluid, you tended toward a particular personality type. They recognized four different types, called the **humors**.

TEACHER writes the four different humors on the board: **Choleric**, **sanguin**e, **melancholy**, and **phlegmatic**.

Choleric people were quick to anger and emotional. Their bodies supposedly had more yellow bile than other people. Yellow bile came from the spleen.

Sanguine people were supposed to be confident and hopeful. Sanguinity resided in the blood, and those who had clean blood flowing in their veins were thought to have this humor. Sanguine people are amorous and sensual and bounce back from sadness. Blood supposedly came from the liver.

Melancholy people had too much black bile, which caused them to be miserable and depressed. They would be subject to gloominess and mood swings. Black bile supposedly resided in the gall bladder.

Phlegmatic people, called so because they supposedly had more phlegm, were slow, cold, calm, and unemotional. They would be slow to anger and intellectual. Phlegm came from the brain or lungs.

TEACHER continues: We already know which humor Hamlet represents. Can you match the other main characters with their humors?

STUDENTS give suggestions. They might look something like this:

Hamlet	Melancholy (moody)
Claudius	Sanguine (amorous, sensual)

Rather than acting in anger or due to mood swings, Claudius is very calculating. He also exudes confidence.

Gertrude	Sanguine (loving, hopeful)

Gertrude always tries to look on the positive side of things. She doesn’t like to be sad, which could explain why she marries so soon after her first husband’s death.

Polonius	Phlegmatic (slow, intellectual)

Although Polonius is often portrayed as a fool, he's actually very thoughtful and devious, though not as quick-witted as Hamlet.

Laertes	Choleric (quick to anger, emotional)

He may be hard to discuss at this point, since his major scenes are still to come, but students may remember this from the synopsis.

Ophelia	Melancholy (moody) or Phlegmatic (slow)

She's probably the hardest to identify. She is such a pawn of those around her that she seems phlegmatic, but her ultimate madness may indicate that she has some melancholy as well.

Horatio	Phlegmatic (calm, unemotional)

Horatio is the calmest character, clinging to reason over emotion. He is uncomfortable with the supernatural and unflinchingly loyal.

TEACHER continues: Unlike some of his contemporaries, Shakespeare created well-rounded characters who might go through several different humors in the course of the play. Keep in mind, though, that at the time he was writing, these humors were considered to be the height of medical science, and they would have informed everything he wrote.

How do these personality types compare to people in the present day? Are they more extreme, or do you know people like this?

STUDENTS share ideas.

Step 3: Improvisations using the humors (20 minutes).

TEACHER continues: Now, you're going to improvise a scene with four characters, one representing each of the humors. What kind of relationships will they have? Can you give your scene a clear conflict and resolution?

STUDENTS divide up into groups of four and work on their improvisations for 10 minutes. The class then gathers to see all of the improvisations.

Conclusion (10 minutes):

TEACHER continues: Act III, scene iv highlights the differences between the melancholic Hamlet and the sanguine Gertrude. What happens in this scene?

STUDENTS answer that Hamlet basically accuses Gertrude of conspiring with Claudius to kill his father. He also berates her for choosing a lesser man than his father. And, of course, he kills Polonius.

TEACHER asks: Interesting that when he thinks Polonius is Claudius, hiding behind the arras, he's able to kill him! Why do you think that is?

STUDENTS respond that maybe he's able to do it on the spur of the moment, or simply because he can't see who it is.

TEACHER continues: Then the Ghost appears and berates Hamlet. Why is the Ghost angry?

STUDENTS answer that the Ghost is upset that Hamlet hasn't avenged him yet. It's also upset that Hamlet is attacking Gertrude, who the Ghost specifically warned him to let be.

TEACHER continues: What do you think of the relationship between Hamlet and Gertrude? Why does Hamlet seem so much more upset with his mother than his uncle sometimes?

STUDENTS respond with ideas.

TEACHER concludes: Now, at the crisis point of the play, Hamlet has committed his first murder. The first part of Act IV consists of four short scenes showing the consequences of that murder. Claudius now realizes that Hamlet is dangerous.

TEACHER divides students up into four smaller groups and continues: Your job is to read the next four scenes, and each present a scene to the rest of the class. For scene iv, end right before Hamlet's big soliloquy. Be ready to talk about the objectives, tactics, and obstacles of everyone in the scene. Use any implied stage directions, and find figures of speech.

Homework: Read IV.i-iv, and work with your group to present your scene.

Study Question 1 (all grade levels): Which humor do you think best identifies you, and why?

Activity 1 (grades 4-6): Draw pictures of both the dead King Hamlet and King Claudius, based on Hamlet's descriptions to his mother.

Day Eleven

All Occasions Do Inform Against Me

Goal: To review rhetorical devices in the context of performed scenes.

Words of the Day:
pun
euphemism
paraphrasing
rhetorical questions

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 4: 1.1, 1.2 (objectives)
Grades 9-12: 2.2 (dialogues)

Language Arts:
Grade 6: 3.4 (poetry)

Materials: None.

Step 1: Review homework, present scenes (30 minutes).

TEACHER asks STUDENTS to read scenes one at a time, then pauses to discuss them as follows:

IV.i

• What is Gertrude's objective? Her obstacles? Her tactics? *Her objective is to convince Claudius that Hamlet is mad, and in his madness has killed Polonius. Her obstacle might be her own love for Hamlet - she doesn't want him to be punished. She also doesn't want the whole court to know. Her tactics are to dismiss Rosencrantz and Guildenstern so she can speak to the King alone, and to describe Hamlet's madness vividly. She also makes sure to tell the King that Hamlet is sorry for what he has done.*

• What is Claudius' objective? His obstacles? His tactics? *Claudius wants to get rid of Hamlet. His obstacle is that he doesn't want his wife to know how much he hates her son. His tactics are to convince Gertrude that Hamlet is dangerous to everyone, and it would be safer for all concerned if he were no longer around. He also lies and says his love for Hamlet prevented him from acting sooner.*

• What were some of the implied stage directions? *Claudius says to Gertrude "There's matter in these sighs, these profound heaves", implying that Gertrude is crying or very upset at the beginning of the scene. Usually editors add the various exits and entrances, but if the stage directions weren't there, the actors would still know to enter and exit by lines like "Ho, Guildenstern!" and "Come, Gertrude."*

• What figures of speech and rhetorical devices were used in this scene? *Gertrude uses a number of similes. She says Hamlet is "mad as the sea and wind," and that his madness is "like some ore/Among a mineral of metals base,/Shows itself pure." The King also uses a simile in the lines at the end of the scene, comparing the news of the murder "as level as the cannon to his blank," hoping that it will spread without casting blame on the King himself. This statement foreshadows the arrival of Laertes, who has heard the rumor that the King was responsible for Polonius' death.*

• Do you sympathize with the King and Queen in this scene? Why or why not? How did the performances affect your feelings about them? *Answers will vary, but there may be some sympathy for Gertrude and even Claudius. Students may also condemn Hamlet for murdering Polonius, despite the fact that he's not an innocent bystander.*

• Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have no lines in this scene. How could they react to the various things said to them? How could you change the scene by changing their reactions? *Depending on the choices of the actors, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern may have the same reactions, or they may be slightly different. It all depends on whether they retain some sympathy for Hamlet or if they've completely gone over to the King's side.*

IV.ii

• What are Hamlet's objective, obstacles, tactics? *Hamlet's objective seems to be to hide the whereabouts of the body from Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. His obstacles are their persistence, and of course the fact that someone will find it eventually. He primarily tries to confuse them with riddles and insults.*

• What are Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's objectives, tactics, obstacles? *They are trying to find the body. Rosencrantz has the majority of the lines, so the actors can decide if he is more interested in finding it than Guildenstern. Their obstacle is Hamlet and his riddles, and Rosencrantz tries to get around them by being as straightforward as possible.*

• What were some of the implied stage directions? *"Safely stowed" implies that Hamlet no longer has Polonius' body, but has left it somewhere. "What noise?" implies that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are shouting loudly. "Bring me to him" implies that Hamlet goes with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern willingly.*

• What figures of speech and rhetorical devices were used in this scene? *Hamlet compares Rosencrantz to a sponge, soaking up the King's favor, and to an apple kept in the cheek of an ape, kept there until it's no longer useful and swallowed. He riddles that "the body is with the King, but the King is not with the body. The King is a thing (of nothing)." This is probably a play on words, or a* ***pun****, implying that the King and his honor are two separate things - and Claudius (the body) is separated from his honor (kingliness) and that his days are numbered - he will soon be "nothing." He also calls the King a "thing", which could be an insult, and Guildenstern seems to take it as such. Hamlet is being deliberately obscure, to confuse his two former friends.*

• Do you sympathize more with Hamlet in this scene, or with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern? How did the performances affect your feelings about them? *Answers will vary - it depends very much on how much the audience enjoys watching Hamlet outwit the less intelligent characters.*

IV.iii

• What are Hamlet's objective, obstacles, tactics? *Hamlet seems to want to insult the King and make him nervous. His obstacle is that the King can send him away, and possibly condemn him to death. He keeps up the pretense of being mad in order to get away with insulting the King and murdering Polonius.*

• What are Rosencrantz's objectives, tactics, obstacles? *He seems to want to please and serve the King. His obstacle is that he has failed to find out where the body is. He tries to make up for this by being very polite and obsequious, and bringing Hamlet himself before the King.*

• What are Claudius' objectives, tactics, obstacles? *He still pursues his goal - to get rid of Hamlet. His obstacle is that Hamlet is "lov'd of the distracted multitude" - the people like him, and would not like the idea of him being put to death. His tactic is to send Hamlet to England and privately ask that he be executed there.*

• What were some of the implied stage directions? *"Go seek him there" implies that the King is sending some of his attendants out of the room. "Letters congruing to that effect" imply that at some point, we might want to see a letter to the English King. It's not entirely clear if the King's final speech is a soliloquy or if he's still speaking to some of his attendants - this would be a choice for the director.*

• What figures of speech and rhetorical devices were used in this scene? *The King compares Hamlet's behavior to a disease that needs an extreme cure - "Diseases desperate grown/By desperate appliance are reliev'd,/Or not at all." Hamlet continues his riddles, playing on supper being a place where one is eaten by worms. He also insults the King by saying a maggot can eat his dead body,*

then be used to fish with by a poor man, who then can eat the fish that ate the worm that ate the King! Hamlet employs a ***euphemism*** *by calling Hell "the other place" - a euphemism is a gentler way of expressing an unpleasant word or idea. He ends with another riddle, explaining why the King is actually his mother, by being "one flesh" with his wife the Queen. The King ends the scene by once again comparing Hamlet to a disease - a "hectic in his blood" that must be cured by England.*

It's interesting to note that the play begins with the idea that Claudius' sin is a disease in the body politic of Denmark, and now Claudius believes that Hamlet is the disease.

• Do you sympathize more with Hamlet in this scene, or with Claudius? How did the performances affect your feelings about them? *Answers will vary.*

IV.iv

• What are Hamlet's objective, obstacles, tactics? *Hamlet wants to find out what the Norwegian army is doing in Elsinore. The Captain responds to his direct questions briefly, and has to be asked many questions before he gives all of the information.*

• What are Fortinbras' objectives, tactics, obstacles? *He wants to march through Denmark on the way to Poland. He seems concerned that Claudius will need to be reminded of their agreement, and that there may be an obstacle. He sends his Captain to remind Claudius, and offers to come himself if there's a problem.*

• What are the Captain's objectives, tactics, obstacles? *The Captain has an obligation to go to King Claudius. He is stopped on his way by Hamlet, who has a lot of questions for him. He finally gives in to the questions and gives a frank answer - that the ground they go to gain is nearly worthless, but Fortinbras is determined to claim it on principal, and risk their lives to do so. We discover a secondary obstacle - that he is not pleased about risking the army for such a small thing.*

• What were some of the implied stage directions? *"Go, captain" and the following lines indicate that the Captain is going in a different direction from the rest of the army. "What powers are these?" implies that Hamlet can see a large army from where they stand. Later, he says there are twenty thousand soldiers. Obviously they wouldn't all appear on stage, so the actors must pretend to see them.*

• What figures of speech and rhetorical devices were used in this scene? *The Captain uses hyperbole when he calls the ground they go to gain "a little patch of ground/That hath in it no profit but the name." Hamlet compares this tiny part of Poland to "a straw" - that is, something small and worthless.*

• Why do you think this scene is in the play? What purpose does it serve? *As we'll see by looking at Hamlet's next soliloquy, Shakespeare is drawing a comparison between Fortinbras, who will fight over something nearly worthless on principal, and Hamlet, who has an enormous reason to fight and yet can't manage to do it.*

Step 2: Hamlet's soliloquy (25 minutes).

TEACHER continues: Let's look at the next soliloquy together. This represents yet another turning point for Hamlet, who has just failed to act and is now being sent to his death, whether he suspects it or not.

STUDENTS look at each section of the soliloquy together as a class or in small groups. TEACHER encourages them to put things into their own words, and notice figures of speech and rhetorical devices. This technique is called **paraphrasing**.

How all occasions do inform against me
And spur my dull revenge!

Paraphrase: Look how all the events around me argue against me and accuses me of being too slow in my revenge!

Rhetorical device: These lines include a new figure of speech: **personification**. "Occasions" are personified and made sentient things that can accuse Hamlet, even though they are just coincidental events.

What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.

Paraphrase: What use is a man if all he has to show for his life is eating and sleeping? A dumb animal.

Rhetorical device: In all of his soliloquies, Hamlet uses **rhetorical questions**, or questions posed that the speaker intends to answer himself.

Sure He that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd.

Paraphrase: Surely God, who gave us the ability to think, reason, and consider the past and future, didn't give these abilities to us for us to waste them.

Rhetorical device: Here, Hamlet presents the main question of his speech - what is the

duty of man? How should man act? He argues that human beings were made for action.

Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th' event,-
A thought which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom
And ever three parts coward,- I do not know
Why yet I live to say 'This thing's to do,'
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do't. Examples gross as earth exhort me.

Paraphrase: Now, whether it's because of animal-like stupidity or the cowardly morality of considering action too carefully - which is actually 3/4 cowardice and only one part ethics - I don't know why I'm still here saying "I have to do this," since I have a reason, a desire, the ability, and the tools with which to do it. There are enormous examples all around me why I should do it.

Rhetorical devices: Here Hamlet turns his argument on himself, turning it from a generality, about humanity, to a personal accusation, about his own cowardice and inability to act. He admits that there's no logical reason why he shouldn't act. He uses a complex sentence structure, arguing with himself in multiple ways. He ends with a hyperbolic simile, saying that examples as big as the Earth itself encourage him to act.

Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
Makes mouths at the invisible event,
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Even for an eggshell.

Paraphrase: Look at this enormous army, led by a young and inexperienced prince, who is so wonderfully ambitious that he mocks the possible dangers ahead, risking the lives of his men and everything he has for something small, fragile, and useless.

Rhetorical devices: Hamlet sets up a number of contrasting opposites - the giant army led by the delicate prince, the enormous danger risked for an eggshell.

Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake.

Paraphrase: To be a great leader, it's not that you should take action without reason, but that you should find great reasons in small things when your honor is at stake.

Rhetorical device: This is the main idea, or **thesis**, of the speech - the answer to the question posed above, how should a man act? Hamlet's thesis is that great men find reason to act when their honor is in question. The "straw" he mentioned earlier in his conversation with the Captain comes back again as a metaphor for the worthless land Fortinbras' army is fighting for.

How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
Excitements of my reason and my blood,
And let all sleep, 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?

Paraphrase: What about me, whose father has been killed and mother's reputation destroyed, whose mind and honor urge me to act, and I let this all go by without acting, while I'm shamed by the sight of 20,000 soldiers going to their death willingly for a nearly worthless trifle, a piece of land that's not even big enough to bury them in?

Rhetorical device: Again, having made a general statement about the duty of mankind, Hamlet makes the argument personal - how should *he* act, when he has every reason to take action?

O, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth!

Paraphrase: From this moment on, let me pursue my revenge, or I'm worthless!

Rhetorical device: Hamlet ends his speech with a rhyming couplet. His conclusion is that he must act according to his thesis - he must actively pursue his revenge.

TEACHER asks: Do you agree with Hamlet's thesis, that one should risk anything, no matter the cost, to defend one's honor?

STUDENTS give feedback.

TEACHER asks: At this point in the play, do you believe Hamlet will take action at last?

STUDENTS respond: It may be hard for them to believe Hamlet at this point, or they may believe this represents a true turning point.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER continues: Think back to when we discussed the themes of the play. One of the themes we discussed is the idea of what makes a perfect courtier. Can we expand on that, after this soliloquy?

STUDENTS may suggest that Shakespeare is now asking “What makes a man of action?” or something similar.

TEACHER continues: Remember the tragic hero and his fatal flaw? Do you have any more thoughts about what makes Hamlet a tragic hero?

STUDENTS suggest that while Hamlet understands intellectually what he has to do, as a son, as a courtier, and as a man, he is unable to do it, but even he doesn’t know why.

TEACHER concludes: At this point in the play, Hamlet disappears briefly and we catch up with the Polonius family.

Homework: Read IV.v-vii. Pick a speech of at least 10 lines to paraphrase in your own words.

Study question 1 (Grades 9-12): Find a famous speech given by a 20th-century politician, and go through it identifying rhetorical devices, including the thesis.

Day Twelve

A Young Maid's Wits

Goal: To stage a longer scene using the "feeding in" technique to help each other.

Words of the Day:
irony

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 5: 2.2 (blocking)
Grades 9-12: 2.3 (perform Shakespearean scenes)

Language Arts:
Grade 8: 3.6 (irony)
Grades 11-12: 3.3 (irony)

Materials: None.

Step 1: Review homework (15 minutes).

TEACHER asks volunteers to summarize what happened in scenes IV.v-vii.

STUDENTS answer as follows: Ophelia has gone mad, probably because of the death of her father and her rejection by Hamlet, and is wandering the palace singing songs. Laertes comes back, having heard that his father is dead, and thinking Claudius killed him. Claudius and Gertrude manage to convince him Hamlet did it. Then, Ophelia comes in and he grieves to see her madness. Laertes vows revenge against Hamlet.

Meanwhile, Horatio receives news that Hamlet's ship was overtaken by pirates, and after various adventures he is returning to Denmark with news about Rosencrantz and Guildenstern.

While Laertes and Claudius are discussing revenge against Hamlet, a vaguely threatening letter arrives from Hamlet, saying that he has returned. The King and Laertes devise a plot to challenge Hamlet to a friendly duel, then kill him with a poisoned sword. The King will also have a poisoned drink on hand in case the sword doesn't work. Gertrude enters and relates the news that Ophelia has drowned.

TEACHER asks for volunteers to read their 10-line paraphrased speeches out loud. After each volunteer has finished reading their paraphrase, s/he suggests that they read the actual speech, while keeping their paraphrases in mind.

TEACHER asks: Did it help to have read the paraphrase right before you read the actual speech?

STUDENTS may notice that the more specific the paraphrased version, the more sense it helped them make out of the speech. Generalized paraphrases that are much shorter than the actual lines result in generalized readings.

Step 3: Staging scenes using "feeding in" (35 minutes).

TEACHER continues: Let's divide up into groups and stage these scenes! Remember to use the implied stage directions, the physical actions Shakespeare tells us about in the text. Think carefully about what you want the audience to think about the characters - should we feel sympathetic toward them? How do you want to portray Ophelia's madness?

STUDENTS break off into 7 groups, each working with one of the suggested sections (If you are working with younger students, it's probably best to work with edited scenes). If the groups have more students than characters in the scene, take turns or have one of the students serve as the director, and assist with "feeding in" as described below.

• IV.v, lines 1-74. Characters are Gertrude, Claudius, Gentleman, Ophelia, and Horatio.

• IV.v, lines 75-154. Characters are Gertrude, Claudius, Laertes, and Messenger (as well as off-stage voices).

• IV.v, lines 155-219. Characters are Laertes, Ophelia, Claudius, and Gertrude (who doesn't speak).

• IV.vi, whole scene. Characters are Horatio, Gentleman, and Sailors.

• IV.vii, lines 1-70 ("that I might be the organ.") Characters are Laertes, Claudius, and Messenger.

•IV.vii, lines 70-139 ("I will do't.") Characters are Laertes and Claudius.

IV.vii, lines 140-194. Characters are Laertes, Claudius, and Gertrude.

STUDENTS should work on these scenes for the bulk of the time, with plans to present them tomorrow. TEACHER should go from group to group coaching students and offering suggestions. If you have access to any props and costumes, allow the

students to choose appropriate ones for their part of the scene.

One useful way to rehearse Shakespeare's lines, especially for those who get bogged down in reading, is called "feeding in." "Feeders" stand behind each actor, reading them about a line or half a line at a time in a neutral voice. The actor then repeats the line, with full energy and commitment. This leaves the actor's hands free for action, his/her eyes on her scene partner, and helps them to learn the lines.

Since there probably won't be time for the students to memorize the lines, "feeding in" is a great way to present these scenes. It takes a little practice to get used to listening to the feeder and repeating the lines, but it can be very freeing for the actors. *NOTE: This technique was developed by Shakespeare & Company in Massachusetts and is used with their permission.*

Conclusion (10 minutes):

TEACHER continues: What do you think about Laertes' character as compared to Hamlet's? Remember that at this point in the play, they've both lost their fathers to murder.

STUDENTS respond that Laertes seems to be ready to kill the murderer right away, and is already plotting to make sure Hamlet dies. He is much more like Fortinbras than Hamlet.

TEACHER concludes: There's a great **irony** in Hamlet's predicament - by delaying in avenging his father's murder, he's become the murderer of someone else's father. Can anyone define irony?

STUDENTS may guess or look up the dictionary definition: "Incongruity between what might be expected and what actually occurs." Since Hamlet is deeply grieved by his own father's death, the last thing we would expect is for him to cause two other people similar grief.

Homework: Prepare to present your scenes to the class at the next class meeting. Also, read Act V, scene i.

Study Question 1 (all grade levels): Write a short story describing Hamlet's adventures with the pirates, as described in his letter in IV.vi. Alternatively, draw a comic strip of his adventures.

Activity 1 (all grade levels): Design an ideal set for the scene you are performing. Create a set drawing and/or a model.

Activity 2 (Grades 9-12): Write and record music to go with Ophelia's songs in IV.v. How can music contribute to the mood of the scene?

Day thirteen

alas, poor yorick

Goal: To consider what makes effective staging. To explore comedy and philosophy in Shakespeare's theatre.

Words of the Day:
malapropism
coat of arms
syllogism
equivocation
humanism

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 5: 2.3 (theatrical collaboration)
Grade 7: 4.2 (cultural context)

Language Arts:
Grades 9-10: 3.12 (historical period)
Grades 11-12: 3.7 (influences of the historical period)

Materials: None.

Step 1: Present scenes (25 minutes).

TEACHER invites each group up to share their scene. After each scene, the class discusses the following:

• What did you think the characters' objectives and obstacles were? What tactics did they use to achieve their objectives?

• Were you able to follow the language? If there were unusual words, could you understand them better when watching the scene than when reading them on the page? Why do you think that is?

• Did you believe in the characters? Did you understand what it might be like to be them?

• How did the portrayals of Ophelia's madness differ from scene to scene? Was it hard to keep her from being funny? How did the tunes of the songs contribute to the mood of the scenes?

• How did the actors create a sense of urgency or suspense?

TEACHER encourages STUDENTS to keep the criticism constructive and not personal. They should express their feelings about the scene and characters rather than about the actors performing them.

At the end of each performance, STUDENTS should applaud for each other.

Step 2: A comic scene (30 minutes).

TEACHER continues: One of the things Shakespeare is known for is his blending of comedy and tragedy. Frequently there are comic moments in his tragedies, and tragic things happen even in the comedies. Up to this point, can you think of any comic moments in *Hamlet*?

STUDENTS respond with ideas: Many of Polonius' scenes are funny, particularly in his interactions with Hamlet, and Hamlet himself has many funny scenes.

TEACHER continues: While the play has comic moments sprinkled throughout, in Act V we have our first truly comic characters, the two Clowns who are the gravediggers. The word "clown" in Shakespeare's time didn't mean what it does now, a costumed comic performer. It usually meant a lower-class, uneducated person. Because these characters were often comical, the word evolved into today's meaning.

Sometimes the humor in Shakespeare's comic scenes can be hard to understand. Let's take a look at the first part of the scene:

First Clown. *Is she to be buried in Christian burial when she wilfully seeks her own salvation?*

Second Clown. *I tell thee she is; therefore make her grave straight. The crowner hath sate on her, and finds it Christian burial.*

First Clown. *How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defense?*

Second Clown. *Why, 'tis found so.*

TEACHER asks: First of all, is this scene in verse or in prose?

STUDENTS answer that it is in prose, which makes sense since these are lower-class characters.

TEACHER asks: What is the question the two clowns are debating?

STUDENTS respond that they are discussing whether the person to be buried should receive a Christian burial if she took her own life. The second clown says that the coroner ("crowner") has decided that she should receive a Christian burial. The first clown jokes that this makes no sense unless she committed suicide in self-defense.

TEACHER continues: In the Catholic faith, suicide is a mortal sin, so anyone committing suicide would not receive a Christian burial. Who do you think they are talking about?

STUDENTS answer that even though she isn't named, they must be talking about Ophelia, since we know she has just drowned.

TEACHER continues: Since she wasn't in her right mind when she drowned herself, it might not be considered a suicide, but clearly it is a matter of debate. Let's continue:

First Clown. *It must be se offendendo; it cannot be else. For here lies the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act; and an act hath three branches-it is to act, to do, and to perform; argal, she drown'd herself wittingly.*

Second Clown. *Nay, but hear you, Goodman Delver!*

First Clown. *Give me leave. Here lies the water; good. Here stands the man; good. If the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he nill he, he goes-mark you that. But if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself. Argal, he that is not guilty of his own death shortens not his own life.*

Second Clown. *But is this law?*

First Clown. *Ay, marry, is't- crowner's quest law.*

TEACHER continues: The first clown has several Latin words in his first speech that you may not have heard before, for good reason - he is using the wrong words. Shakespeare frequently has some of his fools mis-pronounce or substitute words for comic effect. "Se offendendo" is a mistake for "se defendendo", which means "in self defense." "Argal" is a mistake for "ergo", which means "therefore." These substitutions are called **malapropisms**.

Why do you think Shakespeare would have this character use malapropisms?

STUDENTS respond that it makes him look like he's a something of a know-it-all who pretends to know big words, but actually doesn't really understand what he's saying!

TEACHER continues: There are some implied stage directions in the first clown's second speech. How do you think he's illustrating his point? Would anyone like to try to act this out?

STUDENTS can demonstrate that he's using his two hands, or maybe two props, to represent the "man" and the "water." In the first scenario, the man goes into the water - drowning himself. In the second, the water comes to him, so he doesn't drown himself, the water drowns him.

TEACHER asks: What would be the funniest way to stage this?

STUDENTS offer ideas.

TEACHER continues: Next, the second clown has his own theories:

> ***Second Clown.*** *Will you ha' the truth an't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out o' Christian burial.*
>
> ***First Clown.*** *Why, there thou say'st! And the more pity that great folk should have count'nance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even-Christian.*

TEACHER continues: The first clown's theory is that Ophelia drowned herself in self-defense, and that's why she's receiving Christian burial - a pretty silly idea. What does the second clown think?

STUDENTS respond that he thinks she only gets to have Christian burial because of her status - if she were lower-class, she would not have received it.

TEACHER continues: Shakespeare throws a little class commentary into this scene - the first clown comments that the law allows upper-class people to commit suicide without the same penalties as their "even-Christian" lower-class counterparts. He seems to be saying that since all people are "fellow Christians", the same law should apply to all.

At this point, the first clown changes the subject, as if things have gotten a little too political and serious:

> ***First Clown.*** *Come, my spade! There is no ancient gentlemen but gard'ners, ditchers, and grave-makers. They hold up Adam's profession.*
>
> ***Second Clown.*** *Was he a gentleman?*
>
> ***First Clown.*** *'A was the first that ever bore arms.*

Second Clown. *Why, he had none.*

First Clown. *What, art a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digg'd. Could he dig without arms?*

TEACHER asks: What Adam is the first clown referring to?

STUDENTS respond that this is the Adam of the Bible, the first man.

TEACHER continues: To understand this joke, you need to understand what it meant to be a gentleman in Shakespeare's time. All gentlemen had something called a **coat of arms**. Can anyone describe a coat of arms?

STUDENTS may know that a coat of arms is a symbolic picture, also sometimes called a heraldic crest, showing a shield with colors, shapes, and symbols representing the household's mottos and ideals.

TEACHER may wish to show some examples of coats of arms. A Google image search for "coat of arms" will give plenty of examples.

TEACHER continues: Although the second clown clearly thinks they're talking about a coat of arms like this, and says that Adam, as the first man, didn't have one, what pun does the first clown make?

STUDENTS answer that he makes a pun on actual physical arms, saying that according to the Bible, "Adam digg'd," and therefore must have had "arms"!

TEACHER continues: The first clown links this back to his earlier comment that Adam was the first man of their profession - he dug, so he was like a gardener, a ditch-digger, or a gravemaker, who all have "arms" and are therefore gentlemen. What do you think of this joke? Is it funny?

STUDENTS respond.

TEACHER continues: There's one more joke in the scene - let's look at it.

First Clown. *I'll put another question to thee. If thou answerest me not to the purpose, confess thyself-*

Second Clown. *Go to!*

First Clown. *What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?*

Second Clown. *The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.*

First Clown. *I like thy wit well, in good faith. The gallows does well. But how does it well? It does well to those that do ill. Now, thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church. Argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come!*

Second Clown. *Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?*

First Clown. *Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.*

Second Clown. *Marry, now I can tell!*

First Clown. *To't.*

Second Clown. *Mass, I cannot tell.*

First Clown. *Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and when you are ask'd this question next, say 'a grave-maker.' The houses he makes lasts till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan; fetch me a stoup of liquor.*

TEACHER asks: This is a familiar kind of joke, isn't it? What do you think of the second clown's answer? Is it clever?

STUDENTS respond with thoughts.

TEACHER asks: Is it the answer the first clown was looking for? How does he discredit the second clown's idea?

STUDENTS respond: It's not the answer the first clown is looking for, so he turns the answer around and makes it incorrect, by figuring out a way to argue that rather than doing "well" as an answer, the gallows are for people who do "ill," therefore it's an "ill" answer.

TEACHER continues: This type of logical argument is called a **syllogism**. Aristotle defined a syllogism as "a discourse in which, certain things having been supposed, something different from the things supposed results of necessity because these things are so." Does that make sense? Can you put it in your own words?

Having proven the second clown's answer incorrect through his syllogism, the first clown is free to give his own answer to the riddle, "a grave-maker." What do you think of this answer? Is it any better than the second clown's answer? What status does the second clown seem to have in relationship to the first?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. They may think the first clown's answer is no better than the second, but that the obviously higher status of the first clown allows him to insult the second clown's intelligence and prove himself right.

TEACHER continues: What do you think of the two characters? Which do you like better and why?

STUDENTS respond with ideas.

TEACHER continues: It's interesting that even though these two characters only appear in a short scene and have no names, Shakespeare is able to give them distinct personalities, so that we as the audience have feelings about them. Many playwrights at the time only wrote compelling upper-class characters, while Shakespeare was interested in people from all walks of life.

At this point, Hamlet and Horatio arrive on the scene. Like Hamlet's scenes with the Players or the scene with Fortinbras, this scene, at first glance, doesn't have anything directly to do with the plot. Why do you think Shakespeare included it?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. Primarily, this scene is concerned with issues of mortality. Hamlet is contemplating what happens after death - which ties this scene to the "To be or not to be" speech.

TEACHER continues: At this point in the play, Hamlet has no more soliloquies. The only way we know what he is thinking is through his conversations with Horatio. How would you describe his mood in this scene?

STUDENTS may think he seems to be an a humorous mood, joking with both the clown and Horatio. He is also contemplative - he's considering the human condition, and the impact each individual makes on the world.

TEACHER continues: Let's look at the humorous part of the scene first:

***Hamlet**. Whose grave's this, sirrah?*

***First Clown.** Mine, sir.*
[Sings] O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet.

***Hamlet.** I think it be thine indeed, for thou liest in't.*

***First Clown.** You lie out on't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours. For my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.*

***Hamlet.** Thou dost lie in't, to be in't and say it is thine. 'Tis for the dead, not for the quick; therefore thou liest.*

First Clown. *'Tis a quick lie, sir; 'twill away again from me to you.*

Hamlet. *What man dost thou dig it for?*

First Clown. *For no man, sir.*

Hamlet. *What woman then?*

First Clown. *For none neither.*

Hamlet. *Who is to be buried in't?*

First Clown. *One that was a woman, sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.*

Hamlet. *How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us.*

TEACHER asks: What is the central pun, or play on words, in this scene?

STUDENTS respond that it's a play on the word "lie", meaning both telling untruths and being flat on one's back.

TEACHER asks: Based on this scene, what do you think the word "**equivocation**" means?

STUDENTS guess that it's a way of using technicalities to argue one's case. The first clown likes to be right and have the last word. No matter what argument Hamlet makes, just as he did in his syllogism with the second clown, he's able to turn it around to make the outcome suit him.

TEACHER continues: The dictionary definition of equivocation is "the misleading use of a term with more than one meaning." Equivocation was a prominent subject in the English court at the time Shakespeare was writing this play. It was used by clever lawyers to win their cases based on wording and technicalities - in Shakespeare's play *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia famously uses equivocation to save Antonio, by promising Shylock a pound of flesh but no blood.

At this point, Hamlet begins to look at multiple skulls that the clown throws out of the grave. Which skull has the most impact, and why?

STUDENTS respond that Yorick's skull has the most impact, because Hamlet knew Yorick personally. This might be disturbing, because at one point this was a living, breathing person that Hamlet knew, and now he's a smelly skull.

TEACHER asks: After this, Hamlet considers the eventual fates of Alexander the Great and Caesar. What is his conclusion?

STUDENTS respond that all human beings, no matter how important they were in life, eventually become dirt and clay.

TEACHER continues: Compare these ideas to Hamlet's Christianity, and to the first clown's idea that all men are "even-Christians" - that is, equals. Do you think Hamlet has changed in his philosophical beliefs over the course of the play?

STUDENTS respond with opinions. Hamlet seems to believe in an after-life throughout the play, until this scene, when he seems to believe that all people , regardless of their status in life, simply return to the earth after their deaths.

TEACHER continues: Throughout Shakespeare's plays, he both presents Christian beliefs and also the new philosophy of **humanism.** Several scholars argue, in fact, that Shakespeare invented humanism. The definition of humanism is disputed, but it basically assumes that human life is an end unto itself and more than a pre-cursor to eternal life as preached by Christianity. It also that human beings are not innately sinful, but able to distinguish right and wrong without the help of an outside God. Humanism protects the rights of individuals, equality, and science over superstition.

For a society that had always believed in God's will and law as the be-all and end-all, this kind of thinking would have been revolutionary.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER continues: From this philosophical scene, Ophelia's funeral brings us right back into the plot. Did Hamlet's reaction to her death surprise you?

STUDENTS respond with opinions.

TEACHER concludes: Laertes and Hamlet are now established as enemies, planning to fight in the next scene. What do you think will happen?

STUDENTS respond with ideas.

Homework: Read Act V, scene ii. Based on your reading, decide what, in your opinion, is the most important theme of *Hamlet*.

Study Question 1 (Grades 9-12): The first clown isn't the only character who uses a syllogism - Hamlet does as well. Find at least one syllogism he uses. (Hint: look at his scene with Polonius and his scenes in Act IV.)

Study Question 2 (all grade levels): Come up with your own syllogism that uses equivocation to prove something completely untrue. For example:

A feather is light.
What is light cannot be dark.
Therefore, a feather cannot be dark.

Activity 1 (all grade levels): Make a coat of arms using traditional symbolism. http://www.fleurdelis.com/meanings.htm has some very useful drawings.

Day 14

the Rest is Silence

Goal: To understand how all the story's elements combine in the final climax. To identify the resolution, or denouement, of the story. To identify themes of the play.

Words of the Day:
catharsis

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 4: 1.1 (resolution)
Grade 5: 1.2 (resolution)
Grade 7: 1.2 (catharsis)

Language Arts:
Grade 5: 2.3 (main ideas)

Materials: None.

Step 1: Review homework (20 minutes).

TEACHER begins: You've now read the whole play! What themes did you come up with? Can you word them as thesis statements, or universal truth Shakespeare might be trying to teach the audience?

STUDENTS present ideas. Some might be variations on the following (There are many more, of course, which is why *Hamlet* is so endlessly fascinating!):

- Delaying revenge leads to more deaths than doing it right away.
- Noble princes should act decisively rather than delay.
- Life ends in death, no matter who you are.
- If you commit a sin, you will pay for it eventually one way or the other.
- We'll never know when we die, or what happens afterwards, so the key is to be ready to die at any moment.
- If one member of the community has committed a sin, everyone will pay for it.

TEACHER asks each student to defend his/her thesis.

Step 2: The climax (25 minutes).

TEACHER asks: Think back to our discussion of the plot structure. What do you think is the climax of this play?

STUDENTS respond that it's the duel, where Hamlet and Laertes kill each other, Claudius accidentally kills Gertrude, and Hamlet finally kills Claudius.

TEACHER continues: Do you remember the other versions of the story, the source material we discussed back at the beginning of this curriculum? Now that you've read the ending, do you think the play would be as powerful if Hamlet had taken action right away, or if he had lived at the end of the play?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. No matter their opinions, it certainly would be a very different play without the tragic bloodbath at the end.

TEACHER continues: Let's look at the final scene piece by piece. Remember, Laertes and Hamlet have just gotten into a big fight in Ophelia's grave. What does Hamlet's mood seem to be at the beginning of V.ii? What has happened to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern?

STUDENTS respond that the scene begins with Hamlet describing his voyage to England to Horatio, and his discovery of the letter asking the King of England to put him to death. He seems much more cheerful than at the end of the previous scene, and quite proud that he has sent Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths.

TEACHER continues: Let's look at one of his short speeches to Horatio:

> *Why, man, they did make love to this employment!*
> *They are not near my conscience; their defeat*
> *Does by their own insinuation grow.*
> *'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes*
> *Between the pass and fell incensed points*
> *Of mighty opposites.*
>
> What is he saying here about Rosencrantz and Guildenstern?

STUDENTS may note that he thinks they deserve to die, since they agreed to spy for the King. Hamlet also says that it's dangerous for lesser ("baser") people to come between "mighty opposites" - in this case himself and Claudius.

TEACHER continues: What do you think of this idea? Do you think Hamlet's right? How does this connect with the thesis from his last soliloquy, that great princes should

do whatever necessary to defend their honor?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. Some may think it's unfair for Hamlet to send Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to die, since they arguably don't know the content of the letter they're carrying, and are merely pawns of the King. They may also think that it's not right for Hamlet to value his life over theirs, and say that since they aren't high status, they are expendable. Others may think that Hamlet is justified, since his former friends were spies for the other side.

TEACHER asks: Does this speech seem to contradict Hamlet's idea in the previous scene that all men eventually become dirt, and are therefore equals?

STUDENTS respond with opinions.

TEACHER continues: Hamlet, both the play and the character, is full of contradictions. Do you think this makes it a bad play? Or is it more realistic that way?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. This is another great debate, of course, and there are no right answers.

TEACHER continues: Horatio, always the logical one, muses that the news of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's death will soon reach Claudius, and then Hamlet will surely be punished. Is Hamlet concerned about this? Consider his lines:

It will be short; the interim's mine,
And a man's life's no more than to say "one."

STUDENTS respond that these lines seem to imply that Hamlet knows that life is short, has come to terms with his own death, and is determined to live in the moment for the time he has remaining.

TEACHER continues: What if Osric didn't enter at this moment to present him with Laertes' challenge? Do you believe Hamlet would at last seek his revenge?

STUDENTS respond with ideas.

TEACHER continues: Osric does come in, and we have a brief comic scene just before the climax. What is the purpose of this interaction?

STUDENTS respond: The scene does seem a little random, even though it sets up the duel between Laertes and Hamlet.

TEACHER continues: Perhaps Shakespeare is again presenting an idea of what it means to be a courtier. In Osric's case, it means to flatter, pose, and speak in meaningless fancy phrases. If Fortinbras is an example for Hamlet to aspire to,

Osric is the opposite - someone so unsure of his own mind that he can only repeat back what he's told. Hamlet may be indecisive, but he's no Osric.

Once the duel is set, what does Horatio think will happen?

STUDENTS respond that Horatio thinks Hamlet will lose.

TEACHER continues: Hamlet again seems to know his death is near - he has a premonition, suggested by the line "Thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart." Horatio offers to go back and say Hamlet won't fight. What's Hamlet's response?

STUDENTS answer that Hamlet again says he's ready to die, in the lines:

If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all. Since no man knows aught of what he leaves, what is't to leave betimes? Let be.

TEACHER continues: He seems content with whatever fate has in store at this point. How is this different from the Hamlet of "To be or not to be"?

STUDENTS answer that he was afraid of what came in the afterlife, and now he seems unafraid.

TEACHER continues: In the duel, several things happen that Laertes and Claudius did not expect. What are they?

- Hamlet is a better swordsman than expected, so it's hard for Laertes to scratch him with the sword.
- Hamlet refuses the offered poisoned drink, asking that it be set aside.
- Gertrude uses the poisoned drink to toast Hamlet.
- Hamlet wounds Laertes with the sword, not knowing that it is poisoned.

TEACHER continues: Although Laertes and Claudius manage to kill Hamlet, they take themselves and Gertrude down with him. Is Hamlet's revenge ultimately satisfying?

STUDENTS respond - it may be satisfying, but it's muted by the fact that Hamlet himself is dying.

Step 3: The resolution (10 minutes).

TEACHER continues: If the climax of the play is Hamlet finally killing Claudius, what is the rest of the play?

STUDENTS answer that it's the resolution, or denouement.

TEACHER continues: The resolution occurs in the very last part of the scene. Despite the tragic ending, as they are dying, Hamlet and Laertes are able to make some good come out of the situation. What do they do?

STUDENTS respond that Laertes forgives Hamlet for the death of himself and his father. This would have been important from a Christian perspective, so that Hamlet's soul would be able to go to heaven. Hamlet is able to stop Horatio from killing himself in grief, and he also gives Fortinbras his "dying voice." Since Claudius is dead and Hamlet is technically King for all of three minutes, he names Fortinbras as his successor.

TEACHER continues: At the very end, the English ambassador confirms that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead, and Fortinbras declares that Hamlet was what he always wanted to be - a great prince and soldier.

Let's list all the people who have died in the course of the play:

Polonius
Ophelia
Rosencrantz
Guildenstern
Hamlet
Gertrude
Claudius
Laertes

Of the main characters, only Horatio is left alive. Why do you think it's important that he decides against suicide at the end?

STUDENTS respond that someone must be left behind to tell the story. Perhaps Shakespeare is also arguing against suicide as a solution to grief.

TEACHER asks: When you were reading the play, how did you feel when it was over?

STUDENTS respond. They may be surprised at the number of deaths, imagining a stage littered with corpses. They may be sad, and some of them may be relieved that Hamlet's journey is finally over.

TEACHER continues: Aristotle believed that the purpose of tragedy was to achieve **catharsis**. If audiences watched tragic things happen to other people on stage, they would leave feeling emotionally cleansed, with a sense of relief. Have you ever felt a catharsis after watching something sad or reading a sad book?

STUDENTS respond with ideas.

TEACHER continues: Catharsis, Aristotle felt, was essential to an orderly society. By watching terrible things happen to other people, audiences were able to work through their own deep feelings and not react in an overly emotional way in society.

Do you think that this is true? Where do we find catharsis in today's culture?

STUDENTS respond with ideas. Places where we find catharsis could be in sports events, movies, TV, books, and, of course, plays.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER concludes: How do you feel at the end of this play? Do you feel any sense of catharsis just from reading it? Are you totally satisfied by the ending? Why or why not?

STUDENTS share their thoughts.

TEACHER continues: How do you feel about Hamlet himself? Do you like him? Do you hate him? Do you think he deserved what happened to him? Do you relate to him in any way?

STUDENTS respond with ideas.

TEACHER concludes: *Hamlet* is often considered to be the greatest play in the English language. As you read, you probably noticed some lines you'd heard before, or expressions that have entered our common language.

Homework: Choose your favorite line or quote from the play. Write a brief essay about why it appeals to you personally.

Study Question 1 (Grades 9-12): Pick one of the three young men at the center of this play: Laertes, Fortinbras, and Hamlet. Defend his way of being in the world. Who do you most want to be like?

Study Question 2 (Grades 9-12): Why do you think Hamlet endlessly fascinates people and causes so much debate? Write a short essay explaining your opinion.

Activity 1 (all grade levels): If possible, have a fight choreographer come and work with the class on basic unarmed or armed combat, or bring in the after-show Playshop with Shakespeare on Tour. Note that safety is always the first concern when performing

staged violence!

Day 15

Reviewing three weeks with Shakespeare

Goal: To review the action of the play and the lessons of the last three weeks. To prepare to see a live production of the play, and make judgments about the production based on supported opinions. *NOTE: Today's class is about 90 minutes long to include the 60 minutes of performance.*

Words of the Day:
criticism
review

Content Standards:
Performing Arts:
Grade 4: 4.1 (critique)
Grade 5: 4.1 (critique)
Grade 8: 4.1 (review)

Materials: None.

Step 1: Review homework (10 minutes).

STUDENTS take turns presenting their quotes and explaining why they like them.

Step 2: Get ready to watch the play! (10 minutes)

Ideally, at this point students will be able to see the Shakespeare on Tour performance of *Hamlet*. Before watching the show, TEACHER tells students that this will be an edited version of the play -- less than an hour. The whole play would take two or three hours to perform. *NOTE: You may be seeing the play prior to using this curriculum, so you might use Day 15 as your first day and start your study of the play by reviewing the production.*

STUDENTS should watch for the following:

1. Which characters were cut from this version of the play? Why do you think the director decided to do this?

2. The Shakespeare on Tour production uses only five actors. Which actors doubled up in which roles? What effect did this have on the production?

3. Which scenes were removed or heavily cut? Did you miss certain scenes or do you think the most important parts were left in?

4. What did you think of the director's concept -- where and when the production was set, the choices made in the final scene, the costumes, scenery, and music?

5. What did you think of the actors' performances? Was it easy to understand the text?

6. Overall, how did you feel during the play? When was it funny and when was it serious? Did it make you think or arouse any emotions?

7. Would the play have been harder to understand without the last three weeks' lessons? Why or why not?

Step 3: The play's the thing! (60 minutes)

Go and watch the play! TEACHER should stress appropriate audience behavior -- listening quietly, reacting appropriately with laughter and applause, etc.

After the play, there will be a five-to-ten-minute question and answer session with the actors. STUDENTS should feel free to ask them anything about the production or the play, then return to the classroom and discuss these questions.

TEACHER asks: Was Shakespeare harder or easier than you expected? Will you read or watch more Shakespeare plays now? Was it easier to understand when you were reading it or watching it?

Conclusion (5 minutes):

TEACHER concludes: Supported opinions about a live performance, like those about a book or movie, are called **criticism**. The people who write criticism for a living are called critics. No matter who you are, your opinion about the performance we saw is valuable.

Homework: Pretend you are a critic writing for your local newspaper and write a **review** of the play using your answers to the questions in Step 3. Would you recommend the play to others?

Alternatively, write a letter to your favorite actor in the Shakespeare on Tour production telling him or her why you enjoyed his/her performance. Younger students may want to include a drawing of their favorite scene! You can actually send your letter if you like -- the actors are always happy to read them! Send it to Shakespeare on Tour at P.O.Box 460937, San Francisco, CA 94146.

Study Question 1 (all grade levels): Find a theatrical or film review in your local paper and read it. Then see the play or movie yourself. Do you agree with the critic? Why or why not?

appendix:

producing hamlet

Step 1: Choosing the play

Hamlet is usually studied in 11th or 12th grade in the public school system. Shakespeare on Tour has never attempted to perform the full plot of *Hamlet* before, although about ten years ago, we performed a collection of scenes and original material called *Digging Hamlet.* Director Rebecca J. Ennals started with a script from a Teen Camp production of *Hamlet* and expanded it. She went through about 6 drafts, doing readings with actors along the way to make sure it was about an hour in length.

Step 2: The artistic team is assembled

Rebecca decided to set the play fairly traditionally, to take advantage of sets and costumes already in stock - always a good way to save money! She invited set designer Serina Serjama and composer Bill Walker to return from previous seasons. Costumes were pulled from stock. For the final fight scene, she hired well-known Bay Area fight director Carla Pantoja, who choreographed last year's production of *Romeo and Juliet*, to do the fight choreography.

Step 3: Casting the show

Rebecca held auditions in June and cast 5 full-time and 5 alternate actors. Half of the actors returned from last year's tour of *Romeo and Juliet*.

Step 4: The design process

Bill and Serina began to send Rebecca drawings and musical clips for her to listen to. These were adjusted with her feedback, and the two designers started to make the design elements ready for rehearsals. Rebecca had costume fittings and pulled props from the Festival's stock.

Step 5: Rehearsals begin

In late September, the actors began rehearsing with Rebecca five days a week, six hours a day. During the first week, they worked with the text and decided on stage movement (blocking). The second week brought more in-depth work on the characters and language and the incorporation of some props, costumes, and set elements. Carla came in to stage the fights, and Kristin Clippard, the Festival's Education Associate, trained the actors to teach the Playshops. During week three, the cast worked on the set and incorporated all the music cues and costume changes. The alternate actors also had a chance to learn the blocking and practice with the full-time cast.

Step 6: On the road!

Finally, the cast previewed the show before an audience. Rebecca gave them their final rehearsal notes and they were off in the van to locations all over the state.