

*Lesson Plans and Assessment Rubrics on
Shakespeare's Hamlet (12th grade)*

Contributors:

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Hamlet: Alternate Ending Narrative Poem – Honors

Task Overview

Your group will write a 30–40 line narrative poem that presents an alternate ending to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. Your poem should tell a complete story with a clear beginning, middle, and end, and it must include a rhyme scheme of your choice. The poem should be divided into three or four stanzas that reflect the major stages of your story (e.g., returning home, confrontation, turning point, and resolution).

Primary Source Connection

Examine the image *Edwin Booth as Hamlet* (Library of Congress). With your group, discuss:

- What emotions or ideas about Hamlet does this image convey?
- What moment might this image capture in the story?
- How could you use this image to inspire a new direction or resolution for Hamlet’s ending?

Write a few notes based on your discussion.

Writing Your Poem

Your poem must:

- Begin with Ophelia’s death and Hamlet’s return from England.
- Be broken into three or four stanzas representing the story’s beginning, middle, and end.
- Use a consistent rhyme scheme of your choice.
- Stay true to the tone, style, and complexity of *Hamlet*.
- Be 30–40 lines long.
- Demonstrate thoughtful use of figurative language and imagery (at least four examples).
- Be completed and submitted by the end of tomorrow’s class to NoRedInk.

Analytical Reflection

After completing your group’s poem, write a one-paragraph analysis (6–8 sentences) explaining:

- The changes your group made to the original ending.
- The reasons behind those changes.
- How your new ending affects or reinterprets one or more of the play’s major themes (such as revenge, forgiveness, fate, corruption, or justice).
- What message or commentary your version communicates about human nature or morality.

Example Stanza

Ophelia's body drifts beneath the willow's sigh,
Her story ends where sorrow meets the sky.
Hamlet returns from England, scarred and worn,
To find the court in grief, its peace all torn.
Laertes burns with anger, eyes of flame,
He blames the prince and calls out Hamlet's name.
But Claudius, trembling, falls before his foe,
Begging for mercy, truth at last to show.

Rubric

Criteria	4 – Exceptional	3 – Proficient	2 – Developing	1 – Beginning
Narrative Structure	Clear beginning, middle, and end; logical and complete story with 3–4 well-developed stanzas.	Mostly clear story; one section underdeveloped; structure consistent.	Some confusion or weak transitions; stanza division inconsistent.	Lacks structure or logical sequence; missing sections.
Creativity & Interpretation	Imaginative, original, and thematically rich; shows deep understanding of <i>Hamlet's</i> tone and characters.	Creative and thoughtful; mostly consistent with <i>Hamlet</i> .	Some creativity; limited connection to characters or tone.	Minimal creativity; weak connection to <i>Hamlet</i> .
Language & Poetic Devices	Sophisticated language; vivid imagery; strong use of figurative language and sound devices.	Good imagery and diction; some creative phrasing.	Basic word choice; limited or inconsistent use of devices.	Flat language; lacks poetic quality or figurative elements.
Rhyme & Form	Consistent rhyme and rhythm that enhance the poem's flow and meaning.	Mostly consistent rhyme; a few forced lines.	Some irregular rhyme or flow issues.	Lacks rhyme or structure; difficult to follow.
Analytical Reflection	Insightful explanation of changes and themes; demonstrates strong understanding of <i>Hamlet's</i> ideas.	Clear explanation with some thematic analysis.	Basic explanation; limited discussion of themes.	Weak or missing reflection; no clear connection to the play.

Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School Lesson Plan 2025-2026

Teacher: Kryssal Smith

Week of: October 6-8, 2025

Subject: English IV

Monday		
<p>Standard Indicator: ELA.E4.AOR.1.1 Evaluate and critique how multiple perspectives, context, and key elements work together to enhance and deepen meaning or style within and across texts. ELA.E4.AOR.2.1 Evaluate and critique the development of universal themes across literary texts from different time periods, places, and/or cultures.</p>		
<p>Lesson Objective: Students will analyze key scenes from Hamlet Act V and use inspiration from the Library of Congress Shakespeare exhibit to collaboratively rewrite the ending of the play as a narrative poem, exploring how changes to plot affect the play's themes.</p>		
<p>Success Criteria: I can identify and explain key events and themes in Act V of Hamlet. I can collaborate to rewrite the ending of Hamlet in the form of a narrative poem that reflects a change in plot and theme.</p>		
<i>Component</i>	<i>Teacher Instructional Actions</i>	<i>Student Engagement</i>
Activating Prior Knowledge	Review major themes in Hamlet (revenge, madness, mortality). Ask: What do you expect from the ending of a tragedy?	Participate in discussion and reflect on expectations for tragic endings.
Direct Instruction	Guide students through targeted discussion of Act V, Scene 1 and Scene 2 using excerpts: - Ophelia's funeral and Hamlet's confrontation with Laertes - The fencing match, poisoned cup, and deaths of Hamlet, Laertes, Gertrude, and Claudius	Read selected excerpts and annotate key moments and character decisions.
Guided Practice	Introduce the Library of Congress Shakespeare exhibit [https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/shakespeare/]. Explore how historical interpretations of Hamlet have varied. Assign groups and explain the creative task: Rewrite the ending of Hamlet as a narrative poem (250 words, any rhyme scheme) that changes one key event. Discuss how this change affects the themes.	Explore the exhibit and discuss how interpretations of Hamlet have evolved. Begin brainstorming alternate endings and poetic structure in assigned groups.
Independent Practice	Students begin drafting their narrative poem in groups. Provide guidance on poetic structure, tone, and theme.	Collaborate to write a narrative poem that reimagines the ending of Hamlet.
<i>Teacher Assessment Actions</i>		<i>Student Engagement</i>

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Check for Understanding <small>*CFU should occur constantly throughout the lesson</small>	Ask students to explain their chosen plot change and its thematic impact.	Share ideas and justify how their rewrite affects the original themes.
Closure	Recap key events from Act V and preview Thursday's presentations.	Finalize group plans and prepare to present their narrative poem.

Tuesday

Standard Indicator:
 ELA.E4.C.3.1 Write and intentionally use narratives within other modes of writing, using effective techniques, intentional details, and well-structured sequences for an intended purpose, including introducing an issue and/or supporting a claim.
 ELA.E4.C.8.1 Communicate effectively and appropriately in structured discussions and collaborative activities for a variety of tasks and purposes to express ideas, share knowledge, and generate new understandings

Lesson Objective:
 Students will present their rewritten endings of Hamlet in the form of narrative poems, demonstrating understanding of poetic structure and thematic impact.

Success Criteria:
 I can present a narrative poem that reimagines the ending of *Hamlet*.
 I can explain how my changes affect the play's original themes.

<i>Component</i>	<i>Teacher Instructional Actions</i>	<i>Student Engagement</i>
Activating Prior Knowledge	Review poetic structure and themes from Wednesday's lesson.	Prepare final edits and rehearse poem presentation.
Direct Instruction	Explain expectations for presentations and reflection. Remind students to explain their creative choices.	Listen and take notes during peer presentations.
Guided Practice	Facilitate presentations. Ask follow-up questions to deepen analysis.	Present narrative poem and explain plot change and thematic impact.
Independent Practice	Students submit final poem on NoRedInk.	Upload final poem and reflection to NoRedInk.
<i>Teacher Assessment Actions</i>		<i>Student Engagement</i>
Check for Understanding <small>*CFU should occur constantly throughout the lesson</small>	Use rubric to assess poetic structure, creativity, and thematic analysis.	Self-assess and peer-assess using rubric.

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Closure	Celebrate student creativity and reflect on how literature can be reimaged.	Share final thoughts on Hamlet and the creative process.
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Wednesday

Standard Indicator:
 ELA.E4.AOR.4.1 Evaluate two or more texts on the same topic written by authors with differing perspectives, and critique the effectiveness of the rhetoric used by each author.
 ELA.E4.AOR.2.2 Evaluate and critique the development of similar central ideas across historical speeches or essays from different time periods, places, and/or cultures.
 ELA.E4.AOR.1.2 Evaluate and critique an author’s use of figurative language within and across text(s).
 ELA.E4.AOR.7.1 Determine or clarify the meaning of known, unknown, and multiple meaning words and phrases, choosing from an array of strategies: a. use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) to determine the meaning of words and phrases.

Lesson Objective:
 Students will demonstrate their ability to analyze and interpret informational and literary texts by applying knowledge of point of view, central idea, rhetoric, context clues, figurative language, and poetic elements and structure.

Success Criteria:
 I can apply my knowledge of literary and informational elements to accurately answer questions about point of view, media, central idea, rhetoric, context clues, figurative language, and poetic structure.
 I will score 80% or higher on the district common assessment to show proficiency in these skills.

<i>Component</i>	<i>Teacher Instructional Actions</i>	<i>Student Engagement</i>
Activating Prior Knowledge	Monitor students as they complete the test. Provide enrichment tasks in NoRedInk for early finishers.	Students will complete district common assessment in StudySync/McGrawHill - Unit 3
Direct Instruction	Monitor students as they complete the test. Provide enrichment tasks in NoRedInk for early finishers.	Students will complete district common assessment in StudySync/McGrawHill - Unit 3
Guided Practice	Monitor students as they complete the test. Provide enrichment tasks in NoRedInk for early finishers.	Students will complete district common assessment in StudySync/McGrawHill - Unit 3
Independent Practice	Monitor students as they complete the test. Provide enrichment tasks in NoRedInk for early finishers.	Students will complete district common assessment in StudySync/McGrawHill - Unit 3
Teacher Assessment Actions		Student Engagement

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Check for Understanding <small>*CFU should occur constantly throughout the lesson</small>	Monitor students as they complete the test. Provide enrichment tasks in NoRedInk for early finishers.	Students will complete district common assessment in StudySync/McGrawHill - Unit 3
Closure	Monitor students as they complete the test. Provide enrichment tasks in NoRedInk for early finishers.	Students will complete district common assessment in StudySync/McGrawHill - Unit 3

Thursday

Standard Indicator:
FALL BREAK
Lesson Objective:
Success Criteria:

<i>Component</i>	<i>Teacher Instructional Actions</i>	<i>Student Engagement</i>
Activating Prior Knowledge		
Direct Instruction		
Guided Practice		
Independent Practice		
<i>Teacher Assessment Actions</i>		<i>Student Engagement</i>
Check for Understanding <small>*CFU should occur constantly throughout the lesson</small>		
Closure		

Friday

Standard Indicator:
FALL BREAK

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Lesson Objective:		
Success Criteria:		
<i>Component</i>	<i>Teacher Instructional Actions</i>	<i>Student Engagement</i>
Activating Prior Knowledge		
Direct Instruction		
Guided Practice		
Independent Practice		
<i>Teacher Assessment Actions</i>		<i>Student Engagement</i>
Check for Understanding <small>*CFU should occur constantly throughout the lesson</small>		
Closure		

Hamlet Newspaper Project

Project overview

- **Objective:** You will create a newspaper that features at least 5 creative writing pieces. The newspaper should use the format and style of a traditional publication, including headlines, a byline, and body paragraphs.
- **Final product:** A multi-page creative newspaper. This can be created digitally using an app like Google Slides or Publisher or physically by hand.

Newspaper formatting

The final newspaper must also adhere to formatting conventions.

- **Nameplate:** Design a creative name for the newspaper and place it at the top of the front page. (Example: *The Demark Observer*)
- **Layout:** Organize stories with catchy headlines, bylines, and images to replicate a newspaper's layout. A multi-column structure can help create this effect.
- **Photos and Captions:** Your newspaper must contain a picture to go along with each story. Write a short caption for every photo in the paper.

Step-by-step instructions for students

1. **Brainstorming and research:** Begin by brainstorming the central topic for your creative newspaper. Research the style, language, and historical context if your theme requires it.
2. **Plan your content:** Decide on the specific stories you will write. Some examples of appropriate stories include:
 - Death of King Hamlet
 - New King Coronated – King Claudius
 - Wedding of Gertrude and Claudius
 - *The Murder of Gonzago* to be Performed at Elsinore
 - Strange Apparitions Seen at Night
 - Hamlet Named Ambassador to England
 - Gossip Column: What's going on between Hamlet and Ophelia?
 - Advice Column – Ask Polonius: What is good advice to give a child going off to college?
 - Obituaries: Ophelia, Polonius, Claudius, Gertrude, Laertes

3. **Draft your articles:** For each story, follow the journalistic style of the inverted pyramid. Place the most important information (the 5 Ws: who, what, where, when, why) in the lead paragraph, and add supporting details and quotes in the body paragraphs.
4. **Create visuals:** Design or find visuals that match your articles.
5. **Assemble the paper:** Arrange all of your content into a newspaper format. Use a multi-column layout and include headlines and bylines for every piece.
6. **Edit and revise:** Read through your newspaper, looking for grammar, punctuation, and style errors. Ensure that all the content is consistent with your chosen creative topic.

Grading Scheme

Each Story's Title and Content = 15 points each (Creativity/Factual Information Given in Play/Grammar) = 75 points

Pictures and Captions = 3 points each (Appropriate Reflection of Story's Content/Caption Reflects Content of Picture and is Grammatically Correct) = 15 points

Overall Look and Design of Newspaper (Title/Date/Bylines/Two Columns/Grammar) = 10 points



HAMLET — Writing Prompt Worksheet

Choose ONE writing prompt:

1.Character Diary Entry

Write a diary entry from Hamlet, Ophelia, Claudius, Gertrude, Horatio, or Laertes.

- Describe their internal thoughts
- Include a conflict they face
- Use at least **one quote** from the play

2. Analytical Option

Explain whether Hamlet is truly mad, pretending, or somewhere between.

Use **evidence** from the text.

3. Gertrude's True Thoughts

Write an interior monologue where Gertrude reflects on:

- Her marriage choices
- Hamlet's behavior
- The political chaos around her
- What she regrets (or doesn't)

4.Claudius's Confession

Write a brutally honest confession where Claudius reveals:

- Why he killed King Hamlet
- Whether he feels guilt
- What he fears most

How he views Hamlet

5.Ghost's Perspective Monologue

Write a monologue from King Hamlet's ghost explaining:

- What he really wants
- His frustrations with Hamlet
- Why he believes the kingdom is falling apart
- Use Shakespearean-style language *or* modern speech.

Rubric (Creative + Analytical Writing)

Total: 25 Points

Category	5 – Excellent	4 – Proficient	3 – Developing	2 – Beginning	1 – Incomplete
Understanding of Text	Demonstrates deep insight; highly accurate	Clear understanding	Some errors or gaps	Limited understanding	Misunderstands major ideas
Creativity / Originality	Extremely original; highly engaging	Creative and interesting	Some creativity	Little creativity	Very basic or copied
Use of Evidence/Details	Strong, meaningful references	Accurate references	Some reference to text	Minimal references	No references
Organization & Clarity	Strong structure, easy to follow	Generally organized	Some unclear areas	Organization needed	Hard to follow
Mechanics (Grammar, etc.)	Very few errors	Some errors but readable	Frequent errors	Errors distract	Too many errors to assess

Scoring Guide:

23–25 = A

20–22 = B

17–19 = C

14–16 = D

Below 14 = Needs revision