



## Containing Multitudes: Role-Playing and Identity in Literature

Curriculum Unit 16.01.04  
by Aron Meyer

### Unit Overview

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How are individuals' identities revealed? Are they static or fluid? Can elements of an individual's identity contradict one another? How are these identities shaped by others? To what extent can people control the construction of their own identities? When individuals reveal different, unexpected sides of themselves, how can we discern between what is one's true identity and what is simply role-playing? These questions are of great importance to high school students, who frequently grapple with issues of trust and consistency (in others and themselves) during a time in life which, for many, is chaotic, painful, and even potentially traumatic. I plan to use Shakespeare's *Hamlet* as an anchor text in this unit to allow high school freshmen to explore, appreciate, and celebrate the ideas that no one person can be easily classified, that every identity contains layers of definition, and that these layers may contradict each other.

### Unit Description

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Whether or not they have considered it in these specific terms, high school students will be familiar with the idea of a "layered" personality. Students of this age are burdened with the responsibility of determining and coming to terms with their own identities. This often involves a process of self-questioning and self-doubt in adolescents, which can give way to feelings of existential dread and despair, as any high school teacher can verify. Working with a range of students spanning sixth grade to juniors in high school, I can attest to this arising, at least in part, from students' difficulties reconciling seemingly contradictory facets of their own personalities. Adolescent students are often self-aware enough to recognize the frequent, dramatic fluctuation of their own feelings and attitudes, but lack the perspicacity to understand this instability and unpredictability as a natural part of human development. Furthermore, students may understand that different roles may be assumed under different circumstances, but differentiating between roles that are played for a specific purpose and one's true nature can be difficult. What better character to explore to give clarity to these concerns than Shakespeare's *Hamlet*!

The issue underlying this confusing nature of identity involves distinguishing between what constitutes a true

self and what behaviors are simply due to roles played in specific situations. For high school students, considering this distinction and how it applies to a character's personality will provide a provocative window through which to evaluate literature, and will encourage students to ask similar questions of themselves. It is easy to classify Hamlet as conflicted or acting in contradictory ways, but how can readers determine who he truly is, and what aspects of his personality are just role playing? Similarly, how does one determine what thoughts and actions contribute to the construction of one's identity, and what thoughts and actions are part of more ephemeral aspects of one's personality?

It will be helpful for students to begin this unit with a series of activities that clarify the differences between the changing moods of an individual, the roles that the individual might play to a specific end, and the individual's somewhat more permanent identity. As we open the unit, students will reflect on temporary roles they play in different situations, and how those roles are separate from the students' conceptions of self. This will allow the class to proceed with its investigation with a common language in mind and will provide a frame of reference for students when we begin discussing Hamlet's various roles and his true nature. Additionally, these introductory reflective activities will expand upon previously learned concepts of characterization (specifically, how character traits differ from temporary states of emotion). By exploring these concepts in much greater depth than they have previously done, students will develop a more thorough understanding of what constitutes a multidimensional character, how to explain seemingly contradictory behaviors, and how to explain the motivation behind specific roles that are played.

Hamlet is a fascinating character, and this is partially due to the diverse and occasionally baffling ways in which he presents himself. He is alternately vicious and compassionate toward others, courageous and hesitant when contemplating his revenge, and impulsive and calculating as he strikes out at his enemies. If students are encouraged to imagine Hamlet as a real person who embodies all of these seemingly contradictory qualities, as well as how he changes over the course of the play, they might be led to understand the benefits of regarding personality as multifaceted. The extent to which an individual may dictate his or her own personality is debatable; however, one of the goals of this unit is to encourage students to consider personality as fluid and evolving. Therefore, classifying the separate sides that Hamlet displays during the play as either deliberately chosen behavior to achieve a desired purpose or reflective of a more permanent, authentic self will be important to show students how to use literature to reflect upon self-development.

Common reactions that I have observed in high school students to one's own instability include emotional and social withdrawal and cynicism. Through a focused, meticulous investigation of a multifaceted protagonist who is neither strictly a hero nor a villain <sup>1</sup>, could it be possible to inspire in students a sense of wonder and fascination at the fluidity of identity, rather than scorn and frustration? That inspiration could be particularly effective when pointing out to students that, although Hamlet is a complex, shrewd, and witty character, the prince "insists on regarding himself as a failure" <sup>2</sup>. Students will recognize traces of themselves or others they know who, despite enormous capability and potential, are inclined toward self-deprecation.

Additionally, students will use *Hamlet* as a means of reflecting upon the different roles that each of us is required to play, which may not determine our personality, though they do shape it and the ways we identify ourselves. A student may occupy a vast number of roles at any particular time, each of which involves different responsibilities and emphasizes varied personality traits. It is not uncommon for a young person to concurrently be a student, a child, a sibling, a friend, a musician, an athlete, a community member, a member of a club, and a member of a church. Each of these affiliations allows an individual to identify him or herself in a distinct way, and to often behave differently depending on the circumstances. However, these separate

roles can also potentially exact pressure on that individual, forcing him or her to wonder, “I play all of these roles, but who *am I*?” By providing validation for students who feel conflicted about their own identities and even suggesting that we might celebrate such inner tumult, this unit will encourage students to understand that inconsistencies are not the same as flaws.

The socioemotional concerns addressed by this unit will complement the academic focus, which will center on extensive character evaluation and incorporate skills of comparative analysis. These analytical skills will build upon the foundations of close reading that students have been developing in middle school. In this unit, students will investigate the various ways in which Hamlet is revealed as a multidimensional character, and then apply a comparative analysis study to him using another character from an independent reading book of their choice.

Harold Bloom notes that *Hamlet* is, somewhat paradoxically, “the most original literary work in Western literature,” and also “so familiar that we seem to have read it before, even when we encounter it for the first time” <sup>3</sup>. I believe that this familiarity lies not just in the plot of *Hamlet*, which may be at least partially well-known to many students due to its various adaptations, but also in the character of Hamlet himself, who demonstrates many traits with which high school students may identify: resentment toward some members of his family, loyalty to a true friend, nostalgia for earlier, simpler times, uncertain attitudes toward sexuality, and contemplation of life and death. It is my hope that upon students’ first reading of *Hamlet*, this familiarity will help make the play be accessible to them, and that it will allow them to explore and identify with a character for whom traditional classifications are too restrictive. Using literature as a means of exploring oneself, in my experience, can be a helpful means of clarifying academic skills and concepts for students who might otherwise be reluctant or resistant to such pursuits.

While Hamlet will be a useful means for students to reflect on their own layered identities, he is far more complex and perplexing than the average high school student; he is “a performer, prince, son, scholar, madman, lover, friend, swordsman, and, ultimately, a murderer” <sup>4</sup>. Therefore, he provides unusually pressing opportunities for investigation and debate regarding his many roles and how they intersect and contradict one another. Bloom understands Hamlet’s identity as a multifaceted one almost too expansive for one body to contain. According to Bloom, Hamlet comprehends more about humanity than any real person, and we “cannot reduce [him] to any consistency” <sup>5</sup>. This is precisely why Hamlet is the ideal figure to consider when examining how a single individual may encompass myriad values and identities that may occasionally be at odds with each other. Hamlet is a more vast character than any of us, so his conflicts and contradictions may be more apparent. By parsing the seemingly disjointed versions of Hamlet that are present in the play, we can see how he is constructed as a three-dimensional human, which leads us to consider how we may occupy separate roles, exposing different sides of ourselves under different circumstances.

After establishing these divisions between the different roles that Hamlet plays, we may begin to determine under what circumstances Hamlet is revealing his true nature. Because he uses deception frequently in the text, it will be helpful to focus on specific situations in which what *appears* is different from what actually *is*. As the prince himself states, “I have that within which passes show” (I.ii.85), reminding us that individuals seldom reveal all of themselves. As we read the play, students will be prompted to evaluate the reasons that Hamlet chooses his words and behavior differently when he is alone with Horatio, as opposed to his encounters with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, or with Claudius, or with Ophelia. How can we recognize that these other encounters are in some way less authentic than Hamlet’s actions and speech toward Horatio? Is it helpful to say, as Bloom does, that Horatio is “Hamlet’s perpetual audience, which is why Horatio is in the play” <sup>6</sup>? How does Horatio behave toward Hamlet that allows Hamlet to be more honest and forthright with

him than with other characters in the play? How does the behavior of other characters in the play not allow Hamlet this same freedom? Providing students opportunities to assess the potential hidden meaning behind specific interactions between characters, specific lines, and specific actions will encourage students to be skeptical as they read, and will push them to think critically outside the confines of the text.

A recurring practice in this unit will be to examine closely a specific line or set of lines from a character, and then determine what could possibly be revealed by the speaker in those lines. In many cases, this will involve extensive discussion between students to explore what possible meanings could be extracted from these sections of text. The goal of this series of discussions, with respect to the overall themes of the unit, is to explore how multiple (occasionally contrasting) elements of an individual's identity may be revealed in a single line or a few lines of speech.

The first line that will be subject to this examination is Hamlet's statement of intent that concludes his soliloquy in Act II, Scene 2: "The play's the thing / Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king" (II.2.543). As we examine this line, students will be prompted to think carefully and discuss its meaning. How is this line connected to a role that Hamlet has assumed? Beyond this, does this line express Hamlet's true intention? What does he really wish to do? It could be argued that Hamlet's deeper concern, and the one which more extensively affects who he is, is not the conscience of the *king*, but of the *queen*. If that is the case, Hamlet is speaking deceptively to himself. How does this act - telling oneself one thing but thinking otherwise - reveal aspects of Hamlet's identity?

We will also consider Hamlet's speech to Horatio in Act III, Scene 2. In his declaration of affection for Horatio, Hamlet pays his friend many compliments, though voiced at first in the third person: "Give me that man / That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him / In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart, / As I do thee" (III.2.70). What values does Hamlet demonstrate here? He makes complimentary statements to various people throughout the play, but they are often cloaked in sarcasm and irony. Students will contrast the fondness expressed in these lines with statements Hamlet makes to Polonius, Rosencrantz, and Guildenstern. How do we know that Hamlet's affinity for Horatio is sincere, and what does this say about the prince's true nature?

Additional dialogue that could be subject to this close examination might include Hamlet's remark to Horatio, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, / Rough-hew them how we will" (V.ii.10). When Hamlet says this, what does he reveal about his own faith? Students will first consider this question, and then discuss whether religious belief is indeed part of one's identity, and if so, to what extent. We may then assess whether this statement is consistent with Hamlet's personality, or if he is simply speaking in religious platitudes. In the latter case, does this nevertheless reveal something about his identity?

It will also be helpful to look closely at scenes and lines that specifically involve role-playing in order to illustrate the difference between how Hamlet's identity is constructed and how he plays parts distinct from that. For example, in their first encounter in the play, Hamlet feigns ignorance in order to deceive Polonius. As a class, we might discuss this scene and speculate why Hamlet might take such an approach. Why does Hamlet seem to intentionally misunderstand Polonius, and how does Polonius respond? What is hidden in Hamlet's speech in this scene? These questions could lead into a discussion of Hamlet's "antic disposition" and clarify for students why the prince has chosen this course of action, which will provide some clarity as we continue to read the play. The subsequent conversation between Hamlet and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern could be examined using similar guiding questions. Looking closely at these exchanges will be helpful to illustrate situations in which a role, separate and distinct from a character's true nature, is played to a specific end - or simply for the purpose of "self-expression" or "staying in practice," thus revealing aspects of that

character's identity.

Approaching *Hamlet* with this specific focus in mind will be beneficial when students begin reading the play. Since this unit is designed for a freshman English class, it is likely that the majority of students will be reading Shakespeare for the first time. Because decoding the language of the play can be a daunting task for students, it will be helpful to apply such a specific focus when reading and discussing the text.

## Teaching Strategies

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This unit will incorporate student-centered learning to initiate development of skills that is authentic and relevant to students. A primary means of putting students in charge of the process of inquiry will be the use of Socratic Circle discussions. This activity uses a seminar format to allow students to investigate material with minimal interruption from the teacher after the initial prompt. All students are encouraged to posit new ideas organically as they discuss class material, while the teacher acts as a facilitator for the conversation. These discussions have been extremely successful in my English classes in the past, and I frequently notice an increase in engagement from students who are often more taciturn during teacher-led question and answer sessions.

To advance students' engagement and feelings of ownership and responsibility in the learning process, I will frequently ask that students submit discussion questions to be used in class, rather than assign comprehension questions for students to answer. Students should be made aware that not all of their questions will be used in class discussions. When teaching Shakespeare in the past, I have found that this practice encourages students to engage more deeply with the complex reading material than if the students are simply looking for the answer to a question about the events of the story.

This unit adapts elements of Kyleene Beers' "Notice and Note" close reading strategy. Using this method, readers hunt for specific plot elements to uncover and explain as they read. One of these plot elements is called "Contrasts and Contradictions," in which a character reveals a side of him or herself that is unexpected based on what the reader already knows. Incorporating this strategy for close reading will provide students with a more concrete objective as they explore the text. I have found success with this reading strategy in the past, particularly with students who may be reluctant to read. These students tend to respond positively to having a defined purpose while reading, instead of simply reading a text for the sake of finishing an assignment.

I will also provide students with frequent opportunities to make connections between the text and real life. As students explore Hamlet as a multifaceted character, it will be useful to point to examples in the real world of people in the news who may demonstrate contradictory personality traits in different situations. This will allow students to make relevant, authentic connections as we read, and will foster critical thinking skills as students evaluate the actions and motives of people they encounter in life. In my experience, demonstrating how a text may be used as a tool to make commentary on the real world is helpful for students to understand the importance of reading.

Cooperative learning activities will be a frequent practice during this unit. Students will be provided copious opportunities to work collaboratively to complete in-class assignments. I find that small group work is useful

for all students in class, particularly when each is assigned a specific position of responsibility (as in “jigsaw” activities). Additionally, students will be required to complete activities outside of class using collaborative technology. This will provide students with a support network and a community that extends beyond the classroom and after the school day ends.

Student choice will be a crucial element in the construction of our instruction. Students will be required to incorporate findings from a book they have selected independently to complete the comparative analysis component of this unit. When students have some control over the shape that their investigation will take, they will likely invest more in the corresponding tasks. Additionally, the wide variety of student-chosen material to use for comparison to *Hamlet* will reinforce a key concept of this unit: that a conflicted, multifaceted identity is not unique to Hamlet, but that this divided self is a universal idea present in a wide scope of literature.

Finally, differentiated instructional practice will be incorporated. Students will have access to modified, “modernized” versions of the text for reading assignments completed independently. Original text will be used for in-class literary analysis, but modified texts will be available for students who struggle to understand Shakespearean language.

## Performance Task

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Students will write an analytical paper explaining how Hamlet and another character from a source of their choice are characterized in different, seemingly contradictory ways. The paper should discuss two opposing character traits that may be applied to Hamlet and the other character they have selected. How do these descriptors contribute to the establishment of a complex, three-dimensional identity? Are they elements of a true identity, or are they part of a role that is played toward a desired outcome? Furthermore, why does each character demonstrate these traits? Is it a matter of choice, or are the characters reacting to circumstances beyond their control?

## Essential Questions

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- What factors construct an individual’s identity?
- How are the roles that an individual assumes separate from that individual’s identity?
- How can an identity change?
- How do people’s different roles shape identity?
- How can the acquisition of information affect or change someone?

## Supporting Questions

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- How are separate facets of identity revealed?
- How is a person’s identity revealed differently alone and to others?
- Are different facets of identity equally authentic?

## Content Objectives

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- Make assessments and judgments about a character based on his or her thoughts, speech, and actions
- Compare and contrast how different characters are revealed to have multifaceted identities
- Explain how separate elements constitute a complete identity
- Explain how the acquisition of information can change a character or reveal different facets of his or her identity

## Examples of Classroom Activities

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### Lesson One: Containing Multitudes

#### Do Now

As a group, students will brainstorm to define *identity*. Teacher will write students’ suggested words that they associate with identity on the board. After this brainstorming session, students will write in their journals to explain what identity means to them.

#### Activity 1: “Song of Myself”

The teacher will lead students in a guided reading and annotation of selections from Walt Whitman’s “Song of Myself.” As we read, we will explore the use of metaphor, hyperbole, and personification.

#### Activity 2: Socratic Circle

Students will hold a Socratic Circle discussion to investigate personal responses and connections to the poem. To do this, half of the class will sit in a wide circle in the middle of the room. The other half of the class will form an outer circle around their classmates. Students in the inner circle will hold a discussion for which the teacher acts as a facilitator, supplying questions to direct the conversation when necessary. Other than these guiding questions, however, the teacher will refrain from interjecting his or her own interpretation into this student-led discussion. Students in the outer circle will take notes on the conversation as it progresses and new ideas are proposed. After ten minutes, the inner circle and outer circle students will switch roles and a new discussion will begin.

Directing Questions:



- What does it mean to “contain multitudes?”
- How would the author define a “self”?
- “Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes)” - What do these lines suggest about the author and his view of identity?

### **Activity 3: Identity Map**

In order to further explore the vast range of elements that construct the identity of an individual, students will identify the separate roles that they play. Students will first brainstorm a list of these different roles (at least five) and then map them out on a sheet of paper. Related roles should be grouped more closely together, and different roles should be positioned further apart. Around each role, students will note the particular qualities that are expected of them in each situation. The teacher will model this process. For example, the teacher might write “Parent” for one role, “Educator” for another, “Musician” for another, and so on. The teacher will then ask students to supply traits that they think are necessary for one of these roles, and will write these qualities under that title. For example, students might suggest that as a parent, the teacher would have to demonstrate love, patience, and honesty. Students will then begin brainstorming for their own maps, exploring the ways in which they “contain multitudes.”

Once this project is completed, students will have produced a visual sketch of their own multifaceted identities, on which the variation between the different qualities each individual demonstrates is depicted by physical distance on the map. Later in the unit, students will be required to complete the same activity using Hamlet as the subject for the map.

## **Lesson Two**

### **Do Now**

Students will free-write in their journals, describing the attributes they would expect a “hero” to have. Why are these characteristics necessary to be a heroic person? What people or characters can you think of that violate this classification?

### **Activity 1: Character Cards**

Students will create a character card for one character from the play other than Hamlet (assigned by the teacher): Ophelia, Horatio, Claudius, Polonius, Gertrude, Laertes. On these cards, students will list character traits and cite evidence from the text to explain why these specific traits may be used to define the character.

### **Activity 2: Home Groups**

When character cards are finished, students will complete a “jigsaw” activity to fill out a graphic organizer. “Home Groups” will form based on the characters that were assigned to each student. Together, the students will discuss what effects their characters have on Hamlet. What traits are elicited in Hamlet by his interaction with each character? Students will discuss and then write the results of their conversation on their graphic organizers, including specific evidence explaining where each character has such an effect. What role does Hamlet play in his interactions with each character?

### **Activity 3: Expert Groups**

When “Home Groups” have finished their discussion of their characters, students will rotate into new “Expert



Groups,” in which each member comes from a different “Home Group” and therefore has a different character. In “Expert Groups,” each group member will explain to the other students which character they investigated and what was revealed in their “Home Group” discussion. During each student’s turn explaining his or her character, other group members will fill out the corresponding section of the graphic organizer, so that each member will have a completed organizer by the end of the “Expert Group” discussion. Students will retain these organizers in their notebooks so they can be referenced later in the unit.

### **Lesson Three**

#### **Do Now: What Surprised Us?**

For homework last week, students wrote their predictions for the next act of the play, which have been submitted to the teacher. On the board, the teacher will display some of these predictions that proved to be false. Students will choose one of these predictions and explain:

- Why did this prediction make sense at the time it was made?
- What happened instead?
- How did the actual events of the play defy our expectations?

#### **Activity 1: Hamlet’s Contradictions**

Students will receive a graphic organizer containing several character traits that may be applied to Hamlet at various points in the play: Impulsive, Calculating, Callous, Fatalistic, Autonomous, Cruel, Compassionate, Courageous, Weak-willed. They will also receive a list of specific scenes from the play. The students’ task will be to look at each scene and determine which character trait is revealed, and to cite specific lines from each scene that support these conclusions. Then, students will use this evidence to argue whether the quality described is part of Hamlet’s personality, or if he is assuming a role. If this is the case, what is his intention? Finally, the students will be required to explain what about each scene brings about the corresponding character trait. Is it an interaction with another character? Self-examination? This activity will reinforce for students the contrasting sides of Hamlet that are revealed through different methods throughout the play.

As an extension of this activity, students will have online access to a visual bank of movie clips from various adaptations of *Hamlet*. They may watch different adaptations of the same scenes side by side to examine how different portrayals of Hamlet may emphasize various qualities in the character over others.

#### **Activity 2: Independent Reading Examination**

After completing the character trait activity exploring the different sides of Hamlet, students will apply a similar examination to a character in their independent reading book. This time, students will generate a list of traits that may apply to the character they have chosen, and then find specific evidence from their book to illustrate how each trait is present. Students will then explain whether each trait is a constituent part of the character’s true nature and identity, or simply part of a role that that character plays. In order to illustrate this difference between ephemeral and more permanent qualities, students should find examples of both.

#### **Activity 3: Soliloquy Study**

To provide further evidence of the contrasts in Hamlet’s identity, students will select at least two of his seven soliloquies from the play. For each soliloquy chosen, students will identify what specific traits are revealed or reinforced by the speech, and explain whether each is a component of the prince’s true identity or a role that

he has assumed. Students will be encouraged to question whether Hamlet's soliloquies (or their own diaries) invariably speak true, and what it means to use persuasive language to deceive oneself as well as others. This investigation may be the basis of a formal written paper, to be revised and completed during this unit.

## Implementing District Standards

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CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

This standard will be implemented by requiring students to cite and explain textual evidence to support claims. Students will be asked to make an assessment of Hamlet and one other character from an independent reading book, and use specific evidence from the text to support this claim. Specific, strong evidence will be necessary for students to show that the actions or speech of the characters they are discussing are due to that character's true nature or a temporary role that has been assumed by the character.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3 Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

Students will be required to complete activities and write papers analyzing the ways that character interactions reveal different sides of those characters' identities or roles.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

Students will select examples of dialogue in the text and discuss the subtext of the speech, identifying and explaining the use of figurative language. It will be necessary to consider the context of these examples of dialogue in order to contrast separate situations. For example, in which conversations does Hamlet use irony and sarcasm, and for what purpose?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.9 Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work

Students will examine how different film and stage adaptations of the text interpret and reveal the characters in different ways. They will then explain what effect this has on the work as a whole, and how this may differ from their reading of the original text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Students will regularly participate in Socratic circle discussions, during which the teacher will facilitate

discourse between classmates. Guiding questions will be supplied by the teacher in order to lead students toward multiple interpretations of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Students will use a writer's workshop model for the process of composing their performance task for this unit. During class, they will have opportunities to brainstorm, write, revise, and edit their work. The teacher will provide suggestions for revision and editing, and peer revision sessions focused on specific writing elements will take place during class.

## Annotated Bibliography

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Bloom, Harold. *Hamlet: Poem Unlimited*. New York: Riverhead Books, 2003.

This resource examines *Hamlet* in greater depth than Bloom's chapter in *The Invention of the Human*. Bloom dedicates a chapter each to many of the major characters in the play and investigates key themes and specific lines.

Bloom, Harold. *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1998.

This resource contains entries on all major works of Shakespeare. Bloom explains how each play contains characters that establish for readers a conception of true humanity.

Domanico, Jess. "Sincerity in Soliloquy: The Unraveling of Hamlet's Murderous Identity." *Valley Humanities Review*, Spring (2010): 1-9. 20 May 2016. <<http://www.lvc.edu/vhr/2010/Articles/domanico.pdf>>

This article examines the various sides of Hamlet that are revealed in each of his soliloquies, and argues that the prince is driven toward an overarching identity as a murderer over the course of the play.

## Reading List for Students

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William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" (selections)

Student-chosen independent reading book

## Materials for Classroom Use

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Selections from “Song of Myself” handout for annotation

Note-taking sheets for Socratic circle discussion

5” x 7” index cards for character cards

Graphic organizers for “Jigsaw” activity

Graphic organizer for “Hamlet’s Contradictions” activity

## Notes

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1. Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* , 404.
2. Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* , 417.
3. Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human* , 404.
4. Domanico, Jess, “Sincerity in Soliloquy: The Unraveling of Hamlet’s Murderous Identity,” 1.
5. Harold Bloom, *Hamlet: Poem Unlimited* , 133
6. Harold Bloom, *Hamlet: Poem Unlimited* , 13.

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