



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
2016 Volume I: Shakespeare and the Scenes of Instruction

Posting Daggers: A Twitter-Centric Approach to Hamlet

Guide for Curriculum Unit 16.01.06
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When teaching Shakespeare, we add to the modern problem of social media distraction the mission to convince students to not only read text, but to read something 400 hundred years old and in verse! So why not allow both worlds to meet? In this curricular unit, young learners are given the opportunity to explore their own world of modern communication while simultaneously analyzing the Bard, comparing the lines of *Hamlet* to how they communicate with each other. Students will explore and analyze Hamlet’s many lines, whether they are meant as private meditations or public barbs, and translate that to modern modes of communication. Would Hamlet have used a public Tweet or a private “direct” message for any given sentiment? Who would he want to hear him ponder whether “to be or not to be,” and how would that look on social media? Through exploration of key, succinct lines in the play that would hold up well in today’s world of headlines, texting and Tweeting, students will delve into the character of Hamlet, his relationships with other key characters, and how words themselves – modern or centuries-old – can have a deep impact upon us, even in brief.

(Developed for English 4, grade 12; recommended for English, grades 11-12)

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