



William Shakespeare: Cultural Icon of Renaissance England

by Brooke Wilson, 2014 CTI Fellow
West Mecklenburg High School

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
English IV /Grade 12

Keywords: Shakespeare, Renaissance England, English Sonnets, *Macbeth*

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: The proposed unit is essentially a unit that covers the English Renaissance time period in a 12th grade British Literature course. This is done through the lens of a cultural icon of the time, William Shakespeare. The language of Renaissance England and the works of Shakespeare are often difficult for high school students to understand. Therefore, it is the goal of this curriculum unit to help students immerse themselves into the time period by gradually being exposed to the language. The unit will begin with an introduction to William Shakespeare. Students will then begin to compare Renaissance English to modern English words and phrases. Next, Shakespearean sonnets will be analyzed and explicated. Finally, students will embark on reading and interpreting Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*. Ultimately, students should progressively become acquainted with not only the works of Shakespeare, but the elements of the playwright's life and society that influence his writing and make him a cultural icon.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to approximately 90 students in 12th grade English.

I give permission for the Institute to publish my curriculum unit and synopsis in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.

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Brooke Wilson

Introduction

I am a fourth year teacher and I have been teaching 12th grade English since I entered the profession at West Mecklenburg High School. 12th grade English is also known as British Literature. This course is often a dreaded one for many students. I know this because on the first day of school I usually ask students what they look forward to in my class. The general response is that they look forward to it being over. I also ask, what, if any challenges do students anticipate. Once again, the general response is that students anticipate reading boring stories that they will not understand.

Each year I face the challenge of trying to facilitate instruction effectively as my students encounter texts such as *Beowulf* and “*Canterbury Tales*”. Usually, students can somehow immerse themselves in an epic with the adventurousness of a hero on a great quest. They find humor in the tale of the many comical characteristics of pilgrims on their way to visit a shrine. However, many faces go blank, eyes roll, and minds began to wander when the class begins the Renaissance unit. Students tend to have a hard time fathoming that William Shakespeare and his works would ever be the popular entertainment of the time. More so, the language used in his poetry and plays perplexes them and quickly loses their interest.

The goal for the curriculum unit that I am creating would be to have students not only embark on exploring a unit on the Renaissance time period, but break through the language barrier of Shakespearean literature in order to fully understand, engage, and enjoy the works of William Shakespeare. My ideas for such a unit will start with humble beginnings; analyzing diction of the Renaissance and exploring the origins of particular words and phrases of the time. It is my intention for students to understand the correlation between language of the 16th century and that of the 21st century. In addition, the unit will begin with exploring background information of the time period from a historical and social context. This will include students researching political, economic, religious, social, artistic, and geographic aspects of Britain from 1485 to 1660. Within this exploration the curriculum will capitalize on the idea of what was popular and trendy during the time period. This is where Shakespeare, his life, his work, and the language of his time will first be introduced.

In the next part of the unit, students will move on to explicating Renaissance poetry, in particular, English and Italian sonnets. Students will be working with smaller pieces of Renaissance literature to interpret and analyze before embarking on larger, more complicated texts. During this time students will learn specific rhyme schemes and specific sonnet construction in order to be able to identify and differentiate between the two types of sonnets. Students will also create their own interpretations of specific Shakespearean poetry and create their own original collection of sonnets. In order to help students better connect, the class will explore popular poetry of the 21st century. In particular, students will explicate popular song lyrics in order to compare and contrast 16th century themes and ideals of love and life to that of 21st century ideals.

As I have previously worked with the teachers of the English IV team at my school to plan lessons, we had several conversations about the need for re-constructing this unit and our expectations of student mastery of the content. Although changing the Renaissance period unit is a transformation that is still being worked out, we all agreed that it is essential for students to understand what they are reading before they can analyze the literature. A key way to assess student understanding of what they have read is for them to be able to explain things in their own words. Once that has taken place, teachers can build on their understanding by tasking students to provide re-interpretations of what they have read. This allows students to show case not only understanding, but they can also provide their own perspectives of the concepts and themes that have been presented in the literature.

The final phase of the unit will encompass students reading a Shakespearean play, *Macbeth*. Students will close read and analyze each act of the chosen drama. Moreover, they will be given the culminating task of creating re-interpretations of the play in order demonstrate mastery of understanding the language of the time. They will also be responsible for being able to analyze the literature and correlate the relevance of symbolism and thematic structure to their own society in the 21st century. With the re-interpretations, students will be given the opportunity to showcase their own talents by choosing to create a visual, a dramatic re-enactment, or creating a song/rap to convey their understanding of the play.

Again, the goal of this unit is to teach students about the Renaissance time period, but in a way that allows them to immerse themselves in the language and connect with the way Shakespeare writes. I hope that students will be able to do so by gradually becoming acquainted with Renaissance literature and exploring the similarities between the language of the past and language of the present.

Background

The School

The unit will be taught at West Mecklenburg High School which is an urban school in Charlotte. The predominating ethnicity of students is African American. The school is termed as being Title I. This means that the school is deemed as being low achieving and relies on federal funding to help ensure that all students have equal opportunities at receiving quality educations.¹

The school is comprised of over 2000 students, in which at least 70% receive free or reduced lunch. This is also an indication that many students at this school come from low economic home environments. Because the majority of the school's students rely on the free meal services, it is imperative that the school remain in compliance with all rules and regulations of the Title I compact.² In addition, it is essential that when planning instruction that these factors are taken into consideration. Therefore, much of the assigned work that goes along with the unit is meant to be completed within the classroom and/or school environment. Some of the projects will require students to have access to computers and the internet. Often students do not have access to some of the materials that are required outside of school.

The graduation rate for the 2013-2014 school years at West Mecklenburg High increased to 85%. In previous years this number has been lower. Although there has been a steady increase in the graduation rate since 2010, this improvement does present a false-positive as student proficiency rates in state mandated tests (EOCS, EOGs, MSLs, ACTs, and SATs) were insufficient across the board. This indicates that although more students are graduating from this high school, many of those students are entering college and the work force ill equipped. These students are still lacking mastery of the 21st century learning skills that common core state standards seek to instill in 21st century learners. Therefore, the proposed curriculum will additionally focus on having students collaborate with each other, practice public speaking, think critically about the literature as well as analyze themes discussed as they relate to their own society today.

The Classroom

The student to teacher ratio yields to an average of overcrowded classrooms. Typically, an English IV course can hold anywhere from 20-35 students per teacher (with the latter being more the reality). Because of the overcrowded classrooms there is more a challenge to engage and adhere to the diverse learning needs of such large groups. Students can easily find themselves either lost in the back of a classroom or at the center of disruption. This makes it imperative for me to create lessons that not only fulfill the requirements for the course, but also are meaningful and engaging for all students.

At first glance a course entitled British Literature is as unsettling as a foreign language course may be to one who has no desire to learn another language. However,

one 21st century skill we've identified as important for our students to master is the ability to make connections between—and find the relevancy of—the past to the present and future.

Rationale

In this unit the goal is for students to be able to analyze the historical and social context of the Renaissance time period. This will be done through looking at the life, time period, and works of William Shakespeare. His works are typically a key feature in Renaissance period unit. However, in addition to reading and analyzing his literature, the unit will also be dedicated to understanding how William Shakespeare is indeed a cultural icon and a rebel in his own right, of his time and even today. By doing so, it is hoped that students will be able to not only find interest in the man who wrote the sonnets and plays in which they read, but will be able to relate to the issues of his life. In addition it is believed that focusing on a particular icon, his contributions to British literature and his impact on not only this specific culture and time period, but the world, should help students understand the significance of studying such a figure.

As students begin the unit, there will be exploration of not only the time period but the life of William Shakespeare through reading informational texts. Students will be able to use those texts to later cite and support argumentation on how Shakespeare's life and society influenced his works and his society. Ultimately, students will analyze the similarities and differences of the subject matters, thematic structure, symbolism, and character development in the selected works on their own society today.

The process of analyzing Shakespeare's literature will first be done through understanding the language of the time. Students will be tasked with figuring out the meanings of words in context, as well as the meaning of figurative language that is used in Renaissance poetry and dramas. They will also analyze use of word choice and articulate how those choices affect meaning and tone. This will take place beginning with poetry explication, in which students will analyze Shakespearean and Italian sonnets.

Within the unit students will also delve into analyzing thematic structure. Again, this will begin simplistically with sonnets. However, the culminating task will be to analyze thematic structure within Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Students will be able to compare themes discussed in the text to current and/or modern day themes in American society today as well as universally. This will result in their continued presentation of argument writing that supports claims (within texts).

Content

The "Re-Birth"

The Renaissance Time period spans from approximately 1485-1685. The term Renaissance means “Re-birth”. The Renaissance actually began in Italy in the 14th century, but spread across Europe from the 14th through the 17th century. The medieval time period gave way to such changes in European society. In the wake of such monumental and traumatic events such as the religious crusades and the Black Death, the Catholic Church and the feudal system both lost their firm holds on European society. The need for change spanned as far back as the fall of the Roman Empire. This resulted in the decentralization of Europe and the eventual formation of a feudal society. The feudal system appeared to be the answer to much unrest and the need for protection. However, it presented an issue of how people began to view others and classify themselves. With the feudal structure everyone depended on each other, but the biggest problem was that people of nobility lived comfortably while serfs and freemen were essentially slaves with little protection.³

Other issues that attributed to the eventual rebirthing of Europe includes the Religious crusades of the Catholic Church against Muslim Turks and the Black Death. The latter helped to tear down the feudal structure by reducing the population from about 10 million to a approximately 5-7 million people in England. The majority of those who lost their lives to the illness were those at the bottom of the Feudal pyramid; the serfs and freemen. At the bottom of the structure, these people were also the base of the society. As their numbers dwindled the pyramid began to crumble. In addition, religious devotion began to be questioned. As people began to restore order in their lives there also came dramatic changes in society. Political reform and economic progression changed the way the people of Europe viewed themselves and lived their lives.⁴

Humanism Emerges

Christianity

From about 200-1300 AD Christianity was the dominating religion of the Roman Empire. Many people believed that disease was a part of the purifying system that God created to punish people for their sins. They accepted this punishment and sought forgiveness through activities such as whipping themselves in order to receive forgiveness and continued repentance for their sins⁵. Despite the prayers of a nation, the Black Death was a threat that remained from this time and re-occurred throughout the Renaissance time period.

The many outbreaks of the deadly disease continually left the survivors shocked, weary, and fortunate that they had made it once again. In the beginning many people continued to devote their lives to prayer and relied on healing powers associated with “religious relics and invocations to saints of early Christianity”.⁶ In fact, up until about

1300 AD the monastery was still the dominating retreat for medical care before hospitals or universities where some research may have been conducted on diseases.

As some held on to strong Christian faith, many people began to change their thoughts. Humanism emerged as a belief that reason and logic took precedence over realism. This was not meant to be against Christianity. However, the belief prompted people of Europe to shift their focus from complete religious devotion to becoming more aware of the world around them. People were trying to come to terms with the changes of their world. Specifically, they were beginning to examine how war, famine, and disease had affected their lives. Humanism was premised on the individual reaching their own highest potential through studying the arts and education.⁷

The Black Death accounted for approximately 80-200 million deaths in a short period of time. Everyone had some connection to its damaging effects. Those who survived were left in a state of psychological instability. In addition, there was also a major change in the class system. As death tolls were on the rise, those who were of lower economic and social standing were the first victims. Serfs and freemen who provided much work and labor were disappearing. The numbers of those who were wealthy began to decrease as landowners lost a great deal of their incomes without the help they needed. People of the lower economic standing who did survive soon began to see increases in their pay. Soon, those people became more easily identified as middle class. Their focus became less on simply surviving and broadened to being able to pursue greater interests in education and art.⁸

The humanist movement allowed people to look beyond religion and cling to secular beliefs and ideas. Such an emergence of thought in the Renaissance allowed Europeans to rely not only on faith, but logic, science and philosophy for understanding. Science began to flourish as people begin to re-visit the work and ideas of great thinkers such as Aristotle. They became fans of newer thinkers of the time such as Copernicus. In the world of literature, writers began to express more emotion and magnify dramatic interpretations of life in their own works. Audiences in this new time period more easily adapted to and even welcomed entertainment that provided thought and enlightenment. Renaissance literature began to emphasize, "Dignity, excellence, rationality and the power of man".⁹

Elizabeth I

The Renaissance time period is known for being the threshold of the re-birth of England. During this time period there also came a change in power through a leader who was quite unexpected. Elizabeth came into power from 1558 and her reign ended in 1603. She was the daughter of Henry VIII. Elizabeth was for some time considered illegitimate because of her father's annulled marriage to Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn. When the

queen succeeded her half-sister, she became one of the most notable rulers of England because of its progression during her time in power.¹⁰

The theory behind her success as a ruler is that Elizabeth was considerably judicious. Her views on religion were also quite liberal for her time. One of her famous mottos translated to, "I see, and say nothing". Therefore, to the people of England, the queen was fair and tolerant of people's desires to choose their own religion without fear of persecution. She gained more popularity after Spain's failed attempt to conquer England in 1588. The Spanish Armada's failure is known as one of England's best military victories which were led by none other than the previously assumed, illegitimate daughter of Henry VIII.¹¹

It should be noted that Queen Elizabeth I stands out as somewhat of a rebel of her time as well. Not only is she the first woman leader, but she continued to set new trends. It is noted that she vowed to remain unmarried in order to concentrate on her duties as a leader instead of the more traditional roles of being a wife or mother. This decision caused her to receive a great deal of persecution from many of the people of England.¹² The idea of a career woman is far removed from being a rebellious act in the 21st century, but it is a strong standpoint for a woman in Renaissance England.

William Shakespeare

Birth & Early life (Overview)

Under Elizabeth's reign the arts became more popular as well. The queen's own love for music, poetry, and drama became the favorite past times of the people of England as well. Over time, nobles' castles became theaters for refined pleasures as opposed to being the army barracks for fighting soldiers. As the wealthier members of society supported the arts, many artists began to make their mark on rich and the common folk of England. William Shakespeare was by far the most notable.¹³

It is essential that the life of William Shakespeare be discussed as it provides a foundation for examining how this writer came to be an icon of his own time. William Shakespeare did not emerge from aristocracy or study at the most elite universities. However, his rise to fame must in some way be attributed to the trials and tribulations of his own life. His life, although far from perfect, is intriguing and relatable to the issues that people today often face. His iconic standing does not develop from where he emerges, but from how he expressed who he was, how he felt about the world around him, and how he responded to the occurrences of his life.

There is often a great deal of mystery and theory around the specifics of William Shakespeare's life. He was allegedly born in England at Stratford-upon Avon in 1564. William was baptized on the 26th of April, which indicates that he was actually born

somewhere between April 22nd and April 25th to John and Mary Shakespeare. He was the eldest child of the couple and the first to survive infancy, as Mary previously lost two daughters. His mother also hoped that William would be a girl as her husband prayed for a son. Growing up, William was thought to have a “complicated nature” that held many feminine traits. It is theorized that these were the results of a having a mother who unconsciously wished her first child to survive had been a daughter. John Shakespeare was always in favor of any behavior that his son exhibited showing wildness and/or aggression.¹⁴

Young William had no understanding of the fact that his parents’ lifestyle and economic status was dwindling until he was at least twelve years old. At this point, his family was considered somewhat outcasts. Six years later William married Anne Hathaway at the result of her untimely pregnancy with their first child, Susanna. At this point Shakespeare fell between shame and pride. He was happy that he had his own family and he loved his child. However, he also possessed feelings of guilt because his father was upset that he married the daughter of a man to whom John had owed a debt in previous years.¹⁵

In 1588 William Shakespeare began to establish himself as an actor and a playwright. He worked for *Lord Chamberlain’s Men* which is an acting company that he also began to help manage. This was a favorite troupe in London that was visited by royalty and the theater going public. Not only did Shakespeare part own the company and write many of the plays, but he also had partial ownership of the infamous Globe Theatre that was built in 1599.¹⁶

It is noted that by the mid 18th century Stratford, the place in which William Shakespeare was born, was quite a popular site for tourists.¹⁷ Further, it is believed that Shakespeare’s popularity stems from his intense and complex development of characters in his literary works. The characters created appear to, “appeal to modern sensibilities, because in ways, they reflect modern values and sensibilities”.¹⁸ Similarly those same components that were relatable in the past have deemed to be just as effective so many years later in the 21st century. The concepts and themes that William Shakespeare presented in his works are universal and timeless, making the playwright a cultural icon of the past, present, and future.

Shakespeare’s Works

Sonnets

William Shakespeare’s poetry is published in a collection of 154 of sonnets entitled *Shakespeare’s Sonnets*. This was first published in 1609 by Thomas Thorpe. It is contended by William Wordsworth and many literary critics that William Shakespeare’s sonnets were the proverbial keys to his own heart. Although there is some skepticism on

the validity of this famous notion, it is a unanimous decree that Shakespeare's sonnets are heavily laden with subjectivity and personal intimacy that is a direct reflection of the turbulences of his own life.¹⁹ Specifically, his sonnets are reported to have been about the emotional relationship that Shakespeare shared with a married woman and one of his own friends.²⁰ Shakespeare's sonnets perhaps are so famous not merely because of the seemingly continuous number of the poems, but because the recurring themes of love, passion, self-pity, sadness and loss are subjects that allow readers a glimpse at the troubles of a cultural icon.²¹

Shakespearean sonnets are complex in structure, which validates the writing and creative skill that William Shakespeare possessed in developing each of his poems. Shakespearean sonnets are fourteen lines in length. They are constructed of three successive quatrains followed by a couplet. Every line is written in iambic pentameter and follows the rhyme scheme *ababcdcdefefgg*.²²

The intricate physical structure of the Shakespearean sonnet is accompanied by further construction utilizing three parts. Within the three quatrains there lies a declared problem or question, a volta (or turn in the situation), and a resolution that is found in the couplet.²³

Tragedies

William Shakespeare wrote a total of twenty-nine plays. All of his dramas fell into the categories of tragedies, histories, or comedies. The focus for the present curriculum unit will be limited to exploring Shakespearean tragedies.

Elizabethan drama imprints on the humanist notions of Aristotle established in his *Poetics*. In it he asserts that the plot of a story imitates the action. More than 2000 years later it has been further contended that such imitation in creating a tragedy involves aiming to magnify "the dimension of the human condition that is represented in the work of art". Further, the role of Shakespearean tragedies was to fill audiences with the emotion of pity and fear. In doing so, the traditional recipe for Shakespeare was to have a main character with heroic qualities and a seemingly happy life to be reduced to a life of misery as a result of some type of flaw in their character. The flaw is generally one that is intellectual. Shakespearean tragedies were meant to provide a lesson and/or learning experience about human existence.²⁴

The Shakespearean tragedies are all premised on the idea of tragic hero who ultimately experiences the true recognition of self. People of the Renaissance time period easily adapted to the developed plots of *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*. While the protagonists of the dramas eventually came to self realization before their final downfall, Shakespeare also intended for his audiences to identify with the importance of coming to understand one's own individuality, which was part of the new wave of humanist

thought. It is further believed that this idea is attractive as it, “may be linked to our desire for an edifying moral after so much violent action”.²⁵ Today, audiences easily adapt to and identify with the story line of a hero falling from grace and realizing his faults in the final hour. It is further theorized that “tragic self-knowledge” provides comfort.

Critics such as T. S. Eliot believed that the heroes in Shakespeare’s tragedies are often seeking knowledge that provides these characters and the audience with a sense of comfort that is delusional. It is further hypothesized that although self-knowledge is the aim of the hero in a Shakespearean tragedy, the audience finds that there is disconnect between the characters’ aim and his objective. The hero’s true failure is successfully hidden from the hero and often times, the audience as well.²⁶ Consequently, such entanglement and warped thinking to justify one’s wrong doing are not only issues that offer intense analysis of character and the human psyche.

For the particular curriculum unit Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* will be the ultimate text that students will read and study. This story follows the aforementioned premise of the hero attaining a false sense of self-knowledge. Macbeth, being driven by pride and over-ambition begins a murderous quest to become king of Scotland. The audience watches him wildly react to fear and doubt of murder and see him transform into a somewhat heartless villain. Yet, throughout his tyranny Macbeth is noted to take on a false sense of self being entangled in his own pride so much that he begins to blame others for his transgressions. Ultimately he laments his actions, but even meets his own death with a sense of pride that many critics consider unrepentant. Therefore, it is questioned as to whether or not this tragic hero obtains true- self knowledge.²⁷

Plot Structure

Within the unit, one of the concepts that students are intended to master includes understanding plot structure in a work of literature, particularly the Shakespearean tragedy. Originally, Aristotle’s theory of plot structure included beginning, middle, and end (protasis, epitasis, and catastrophe). Since his time, many theorists have relied on a five part structure in which a tragedy’s plot structure includes an exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and denouement. The latter, which is adapted from Freytag, is the structure that is more commonly taught in the 12th grade English course.²⁸ Students will ultimately be responsible for being able to identify where all five parts of plot structure occur within *Macbeth*.

Strategies

Gallery Walk

The purpose of a gallery walk is to help introduce complex text or ideas, introduce key ideas of content material, as well as increase student curiosity and interest level in subject

matter. At least two gallery walks will be used during this unit.²⁹ The first will be incorporated to help students understand the connection between the complex languages of Shakespeare time to the language of their own time. The second gallery walk will take place before students begin reading *Macbeth*. Resounding themes from the play will be posted around the room. Students will be aware that the pictures represent themes. It is up to each group to decide what the theme is and how that theme is echoed in their own society today. This will give students a chance to talk about the themes that they will encounter as they read the text. It will also provide a forum for them to collaborate discuss how these themes from long ago are resounding and relevant in the 21st century.

Discussion Panels

Discussion Panels were an original idea created as a different method of the Socratic Seminar. This is a method of discussing subjects and/or concepts with the purpose being for students to discuss understanding and engage in discussion with each other. The teacher is not involved.³⁰ However, it is often difficult to create the ideal environment for Socratic Seminars in large classrooms. It is not always easy for the teacher to assess individual student understanding. Discussion panels require a group of 3 or 4 students to analyze and discuss a particular question generated from the teacher. Students are given a list of questions and/or assertions (no more than 10) in which they must use the text to answer and support or refute their assertions. Students are given all questions in advance and given time to use the text, class notes, and previously discussed/viewed materials to loosely construct their answers.

During the next class period, students will be randomly selected to come to the front of the room and discuss a randomly selected question number with a panel of peers. Students should be prepared to answer any 1 of the 10 questions they were previously given. Neither the teacher nor the rest of the class can interfere during 2-3 minute panel discussions. The rest of the class will be given rubrics to grade each panel member's participation and the validity of their answers.

Discussion panels are an effective way to help students understand the importance of utilizing textual evidence to support claims. It also a good way to get seniors used to public speaking that is somewhat impromptu.

Graphic Organizers

Also known as mind maps, graphic organizers are useful in helping students synthesize their understanding of terms and concepts.³¹ Students can create their own graphic organizers or they can be created by the teacher. In the curriculum unit, graphic organizers are created to help students better understand and complete poetry analysis and characterization.

Learning Buddies

With analyzing poetry and interpreting texts with complicated language it helps students to have a partner or small group to process their learning. Learning buddies can increase student verbal fluency, allow students to peer edit, and also promote collaborative learning, which is a 21st century learning skill.³² Learning buddies can be assembled at the teacher's discretion. Students may be allowed to pick who they work with, teachers can randomly select groups, or groups can be carefully crafted by teacher.

During the curriculum unit learning buddies will be created as students explicate sonnets and as they work through interpreting the different scenes from *Macbeth*. It is often most beneficial for students to be put into learning groups in which a lower level learner is paired with a higher level learner.

Class Activities

Day 1-2

Essential Question

What social and historical influences of the Renaissance time period help to make William Shakespeare a cultural icon?

Objective

Students will be able to analyze the life and time of William Shakespeare by conducting group research on specific elements of the cultural icon's life and creating presentations.

Lessons

On the first day of the curriculum unit students will be initially asked to consider what makes someone a cultural icon. They will be asked to explore people from their own society that they would consider to be culturally iconic despite their negative or positive deeds and/or reputations. This discussion will lead the class into being introduced to William Shakespeare. Instead of providing students with information on Shakespeare, they will be tasked with researching his life, career, and the time period in which he flourished as a cultural icon. Students will work in groups to complete a research project that will include researching specific points about the playwright, preparing a power point presentation, and presenting a 5 minute speech on their findings for the following class period.

Students will be given time to conduct their research in the media center in which they will be allowed to use the internet, books, encyclopedias, and other resources provided in

the media center. Each group will be responsible for accurately citing the sources they use. Groups will provide a reference list that adheres to MLA formatting standards as this is the format that all English IV students have previously used for research papers in English III. All presentations will be graded on accuracy of information, creativity of presentation, public speaking skills which will have been previously established at the beginning of semester (See Appendix 2).

Day 3

Essential Questions

1. What social and historical influences of the Renaissance time period help to make William Shakespeare a cultural icon?
2. How does the English language of the Renaissance compare to modern English?

Objective

Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the historical and social context of the Renaissance time period through presenting researched information on the life and time of William Shakespeare.

On this day students will begin class by taking 10 minutes in their groups to make sure that they have all components of presentation prepared. Students will then begin their 5 minute presentations that they have worked on for the last two class periods in the media center. As students present, their peers will be given rubrics in which they will be held responsible for each group on accuracy, creativity, and public speaking skills in their presentations. At the end of class the teacher will take up all graded rubrics and use peer feedback to help to determine each group's final presentation grade.

After presentations, at least 8 posters will be set up around the classroom with Shakespearean words and/or phrases. Students will be prompted to discuss the meanings of the words and phrases in groups. Once every group has transitioned through all eight stations there will be a broader class discussion of each group's interpretation and/or understanding of each phrase and picture. The teacher will provide clarity on the true meaning of the phrases. Students will be familiar with some phrases. It is hypothesized that some groups will be correct in their assumptions as others will be incorrect. The teacher will extend the lesson by asking groups to walk back around and use classroom appropriate phrases from their own vernacular today that would mean the same thing (See Appendix 3).

Day 4-6

Essential Question

1. How is the English/Shakespearean sonnet composed?

Objectives

1. Students will be able to analyze Renaissance poetry through learning about the components of an English sonnet.
2. Students will be able to analyze the form and structure of Renaissance poetry through explicating Shakespearean sonnets 90 & 130.
3. Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of Renaissance poetry by creating original Shakespearean sonnets.

Lessons

After the previous activity students will be given information the components of an English sonnet which includes providing them with the number of lines, rhyme scheme pattern and the set up of a Shakespearean sonnet (problem/situation, turn/volta, and resolve). Students will also be introduced to iambic pentameter. Class will spend time practicing breaking lines of iambic pentameter into 5 feet and labeling unstressed and stressed syllables in each foot. All information will be provided on a Renaissance Poetry flipchart in which students will be able to come to promethean board and begin practicing rhyme scheme labeling and iambic pentameter practice on the board.

The next class period will be devoted to students analyzing Shakespeare's sonnets 90 and 130 with partners. Each student will be given copies of the sonnets so that they can annotate on the texts as they read through them. Students must explicate poetry following TPFASST Poetry Analysis instructions (See Appendix 4). This includes initially analyzing the sonnet's title before beginning to read, paraphrasing while reading, pointing out figurative language used, determining the attitude or tone, identifying any possible shifts in voice or thought, re-visiting the title to determine if it still has the same meaning as previously hypothesized, and declaring the theme or central message of the sonnet. After students work with their partners to explicate both sonnets, class will discuss the poems at length and compare student interpretations of Shakespeare's works. Once students have explicated poems they will be tasked with choosing one of the two sonnets to re-write in their own modern English interpretation as a homework assignment.

In the following class period students will be expected to demonstrate understanding of the components of a Shakespearean sonnet by creating their own original poem. It must include 14 lines, with the correct rhyme scheme as well as include iambic pentameter in every line. The students will be given a list of topics on which they can write. The original sonnet creations will serve as the students' assessment of mastery of understanding the structure of Shakespearean sonnets (See Appendix 5).

Day 5-15

Essential Questions

1. How can over-ambition and pride present negative behaviors in people?
2. What makes Macbeth a tragic hero?
3. Who should ultimately be blamed for the death of King Duncan?

Objectives

1. Students will be able to analyze the construction of a Shakespearean tragedy through close reading *Macbeth*.
2. Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of Act 1(2, 3, 4, or 5) by creating scene interpretations to be re-enacted.
3. Students will be able to analyze characterization of main characters in *Macbeth* by completing indirect/direct characterization graphic organizers.
4. Students will be able to analyze how Macbeth develops as a tragic hero by answering analysis questions and participating in group discussion panels.
5. Students will be able to demonstrate understanding of the plot structure of *Macbeth* by creating re-interpretations of the play through creating raps or song lyrics to be performed.

Lessons

The next two weeks will be focused on the class reading of *Macbeth*. The class will begin reading together so that students can get better accustomed to the language being used. It will be imperative that the text is chunked into sections in which the class will read approximately 1-3 scenes daily. Time will be allotted for class discussion as well as for students to be able to paraphrase sections of the text and analyze selected sections in order to point out use of irony, symbolism, and characterization.

At the beginning of each class period students will have a warm-up in which they will have 10 minutes to write what they anticipate will happen in the next section of the story. Also, the last 5 minutes of the class will be designated for students to complete exit tickets in which they reflect on what they read, any questions they may have, and what they think will happen in the next scene of the play.

Reading through the text will be done through a variety of ways. In the beginning as the class will read Act 1 together, students should be given different parts to act out the play. It may help to also allow students to follow and audio version of the play in order to hear the accuracy in how words are pronounced and enunciated. This may help increase student understanding as they follow along with the text. Providing a visual for

the story will also be helpful. However, a visual would be better left for a review and reinforcement of student understanding of the story line after the play has been read in its entirety.

After reading through Act II, students will participate in discussion panels in which they evaluate the main character, Macbeth and his emergence into a tragic hero. Students will be given a list of eleven analysis questions in which they will have an entire class period to use the text to answer. All questions will be based on the development of the main character. For every question students must use the text to support their answers. In the following class period students will be selected in groups (selection can be random or pre-determined by teacher) of 2-3 and they will be given one of the questions to discuss for approximately 3 minutes. As students discuss their question in the panels, peers will have rubrics in which they will assess each panel member's participation. Discussion panels will allow for class discussion of the text in which every student is an active participant (See Appendix 6).

At any point during the reading, students can be prompted to create scene interpretations from any act. Students should interpret at least one scene from each act in groups of 3-4. Scene interpretations include students taking one scene and re-enacting it from a different perspective. The purpose is for students to creatively demonstrate their mastery of interpreting what they have read. Further, they are showcasing their understanding by re-creating the scene from a different view. For example, students may decide to re-interpret the events of Act I, Scene 2 from the perspective of cowboys on a ranch or aliens from outer space (See Appendix 7).

As character development is an essential component to note with this unit, students will focus on understanding the difference between indirect and direct characterization. Once all main characters of play have been introduced (Macbeth, Banquo, King Duncan, and Lady Macbeth) students will be tasked with completing indirect/direct characterization graphic organizers. This will also help students continue to engage with the text and the language used in the play (See Appendix 8).

Although plot structure will be discussed at the beginning of the play, it will be revisited after Act V. Students will be provided with a worksheet in which they will demonstrate understanding of plot sequence (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution) by providing events from play that fall into each category (See Appendix 9).

The culminating activity for Macbeth is for students to create a musical interpretation of the entire play. Students will have the choice of either creating a rap or song lyrics that will be performed in groups for the class. Students will be tasked with summarizing Acts I-V correctly, incorporating at least 3 direct quotes from the play, and performing a 2 minute musical presentation for the class (See Appendix 10).

Classroom Materials

Goold, Rupert. *Macbeth*. video.pbs.org/video/1604122998/ 2009. Web. 2 Nov. 2014.
Rupert Goold directs a 2009 modern version of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The television filming stars Patrick Stewart and Kate Fleetwood. Although the play is heavily steeped in Shakespearean language, students will be able to identify with the modern setting.

Holt McDougal Literature: Student Edition Grade 12 British Literature. Austin, Texas: Holt McDougal, 2012.

This is the classroom text used for British literature 12th grade English in North Carolina. Within this text are a variety of Shakespearean sonnets and the entire *Macbeth* play for students to read. In addition, students can answer provided analysis questions that are aligned with common core state standards in the text.

Holt McDougal Literature: Student Edition Grade 12 British Literature Teacher's Edition. Austin, Texas: Holt McDougal, 2012.

The text is the accompanying teacher's edition to the Holt McDougal British Literature classroom text. The text provides Shakespearean sonnets as well as Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. The text also provides teachers with common core state standard aligned questions and activities that help them to teach units.

Bibliography for Teachers

Blau, D. Sheridan. *The Literature Workshop: Teaching Texts and their Readers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003.

This resource provides different methods for teachers to help students read and interpret difficult texts as well as providing how to help readers make sense of varying interpretations of the same text.

DuFour, Richard, DuFour, Rebecca, Eaker, Robert, and Many, Thomas. *Learning by Doing: A Handbook for Professional Learning Communities at Work*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press, 2010.

This book is a great resource for teachers who plan and create lessons with groups and professional learning communities. It provides solutions and strategies for teachers with varying ideas and beliefs to work together to create instructional units that are effective for students.

Moore, D. Kenneth. *Effective Instructional Strategies: From Theory to Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2012.

This book provides teaching strategies and skills that teachers can apply to their own teaching methods based on the latest educational research. The strategies presented will

help teachers become more effective in their classrooms and increase student engagement and learning.

Rutherford, Paula. *Instruction for All Students*. Alexandria, VA: Just ASK Publications and Professional Development, 2008.

This resource provides an array of examples instructional strategies and teaching ideas for the classroom. It provides resources for diverse learning needs of students.

Smagorinsky, Peter. *Teaching English by Design: How to Create and Carry Out Instructional Units*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2008

This is a handbook that shares how to create instructional units for English/Language Arts teachers. It provides the rationale for creating integrated in order to avoid developing units that are fragmented and difficult for students to make connections.

Bibliography for Students

BookCaps, ed. Making Sense of Macbeth! A Students Guide to Shakespeare's Play.

Bookcaps.com 2013, Web. 31. Oct. 2014.

This resource provides a detailed study guide of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* for students. It shares a biography of the playwright that will help students understand his personal life and how it connects to his works.

Crowther, John, ed. "No Fear Macbeth." Sparknotes.com SparkNotes LLC 2005. Web. 31. Oct. 2014.

The website provides the traditional version of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* paired with a modern version of the play. Students can access this source as a means to help them understand particular acts and scenes that may be difficult to understand. This can aid in the process of further analyzing the text.

Duncan-Jones, Katherine. *Shakespeare's Sonnets*. Bedford Row, London: The Arden Shakespeare, 2006.

This critical edition of Shakespeare's sonnets provides detailed notes and commentary that helps readers analyze the complex sonnets of William Shakespeare.

Holt McDougal Literature: Student Edition Grade 12 British Literature. Austin, Texas: Holt McDougal, 2012.

This is the classroom text used for British literature 12th grade English in North Carolina. Within this text are a variety of Shakespearean sonnets and the entire *Macbeth* play for students to read. In addition, students can answer provided analysis questions that are aligned with common core state standards in the text.

Moustaki, Nikki. *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Writing Poetry*. New York, New York: Penguin, 2001.

This guide provides a simple explanation of the construction of all types of Poems. It especially makes it easier for students to understand the set up of English sonnets and the purpose of each part.

Appendix 1: Implementing Common Core Standards

RL4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

This is a component that is central in analyzing Renaissance poetry. Determining figurative language and connotative meanings is a part of the sonnet explication process.

W1: Write arguments to support claim in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Students will practice this standard as they seek to answer provided textual analysis questions for discussion panels. Students must be able to use textual evidence to defend their answers during the panel discussions.

W5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, and rewriting

As students prepare for group presentations, discussion panels, and completing final drafts of original sonnets they will continue to edit and revise their work.

W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Students will conduct research to create power point presentations on the life and time of William Shakespeare. Students will not only use literary texts, but include information text to support their assertions about the societal and cultural influences that affected the author's work.

SL6: Adapt speech to a variety of contexts tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

The unit will include several projects in which students must prepare and present formally in front of the class. Presentations will include a power point presentation, sharing original sonnets, and participating in discussion panels.

L3: Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts.

Students will draw on their knowledge of modern English to make connections with words and phrases of Renaissance language. This prior knowledge and understanding will help students interpret the literature from the unit.

L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. During Sonnet explication students will identify figurative language and how it affects the literary text. In addition, students will use figurative language as they create original sonnets.

Appendix 2: Shakespeare Research Activity

William Shakespeare Research Project

Task:

Work with a group (No more than 3 people) to research the life and times of William Shakespeare. This will include finding 2 significant facts about each of the following:

- Early years (Birth to adulthood)
- His wife and children
- Career
- Scandal (In Shakespeare's personal life)
- Foods (He would have eaten during this time period)
- Style of dress
- His sonnets
- His plays

All presentations should include:

1. Power Point Presentation
 2. At least 3 minute speech (relaying interesting facts)
 3. A hand-out that the class can keep
 4. Write up of each member's tasks in the group
- **5 points extra credit will be awarded to any group that also provides props or costumes reflecting Renaissance time period.

Appendix 3: Shakespearean Words & Phrases for Gallery Walk

Choose from the list of phrases below to include in gallery walk. All phrases derive from Shakespeare's many plays.

- Milk of human kindness
- Neither a borrower or a lender be
- Conscience does make cowards of us all
- Cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war
- Give the devil his due
- Infirm of purpose
- Kill with kindness
- Laugh yourself into stitches
- Lie Low
- The naked truth
- Star-crossed lovers
- Parting is such sweet sorrow
- How sharper than the serpent's tooth it is to have a thankless child
- A sorry sight
- Smooth runs the water where the brook is deep
- Tell truth and shame the devil
- There's the rub
- Violent delights have violent ends
- What fools these mortals be
- What's done is done

Appendix 4: TPFASST Graphic Organizer

Sonnet _____ Explication Name/Period: _____	
<p>Title <i>What do you think it means?</i></p>	
<p>Paraphrase <i>Put into your own words.</i></p>	
<p>Figurative Language</p>	
<p>Attitude <i>Tone</i></p>	
<p>Shift(s)</p>	
<p>Title (Revisited) <i>Has its meaning changed?</i></p>	
<p>Theme <i>What is central message of the poem?</i></p>	

Appendix 5: Sonnet Creation Assignment

Sonnet Creation

1. You are to create your own English & Italian sonnet.
2. You must follow all components of the specific type of sonnet you are creating.
3. Your topic choices ARE LIMITED. They are as follows:

Graduation Project
Your Favorite Food
Your Favorite accessory
Your Favorite day of the week
Spring Break
Graduation

4. Remember, sonnets are generally about unrequited love. Therefore, you should discuss your love for the topic you have chosen.
5. Your sonnet cannot not be explicit and/or suggestive in nature (it must be classroom appropriate!)

Appendix 6: Discussion Panel Questions and Scoring Rubrics

***Macbeth* Act 1 Discussion Panel Questions**

Directions: Answer all questions using the text to support your answers. You must answer all questions as you do not know which one you will be asked to discuss during your panel session.

1. Who is more guilty-he who comes up with the crime or he who commits the crime? Use textual evidence to support your answer.
2. What do Banquo's reservations about the witches indicate about his character in comparison to Macbeth's? Use textual evidence to support your answer.
3. What flaws does King Duncan exude?
4. Who is more sinister-the witches or Lady Macbeth. Use textual evidence to support your claim.
5. Use textual evidence to provide how Macbeth's tragic flaw recurring even in the 1st act of the play?
6. What does Lady Macbeth's opinion of her husband infer about him? Use textual evidence to support how she is right or wrong in her assertions.
7. When does over-ambition become negative? Use text to support your claim.
8. How can Lady Macbeth be compared to Rae Carruth? Use textual evidence to make your comparison.
9. How does Macbeth already appear to be a character with a guilty conscience?
10. What does Lady Macbeth's compelling argument to convince Macbeth to murder King Duncan indicate about her character? Use the text to support your answer.
11. What do Macbeth's arguments to himself against killing King Duncan infer about his true character? Use the text to support your answer.

Macbeth Discussion Panel Rubric

	1	2	3	4
Supporting Information	Evidence is unrelated to argument.	Argument is supported by limited evidence.	Evidence clearly supports the position; but there is not enough evidence.	Evidence clearly supports the position; evidence is sufficient.
Organization	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around.	Student presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow.
Delivery	Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for students in the back of class to hear.	Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation.	Student's voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly.	Student used a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation
Content Knowledge	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only rudimentary questions.	Student is at ease with content, but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required)with explanations and elaboration.

Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
Score: /16				
Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
Score: /16				
Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
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	1	2	3	4
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Appendix 7: Scene Re-Interpretation Activity and Grading Rubric

Shakespearean Theatre Time!

Directions:

- ✓ *Get into groups of no more than 3*
- ✓ *Pick 1 scene from Act 1 or 2 and provide your own dramatic re-interpretation of that scene (should be at least 2 minutes long).*
- ✓ *Provide a 1 paragraph (7-8 well developed sentences) rationale to explain why your group chose the particular type of interpretation and the significance of this scene to the story.*

You will need to:

1. *Re-write the dialogue using your own words and choosing your own setting (example: Teenagers in a high school, Cowboys on a ranch, aliens in outer space, etc.)*
2. *Provide a statement of why you chose your particular Style of interpretation (at least 1 paragraph)*
3. *Act out your scene for the class (EVERYONE in your group must get into character to receive full credit!)*

Scene Re-interpretation Rubric	1	2	3	4
Content Did the presentation effectively use rhetorical appeals?	Presentation has little to no use of rhetorical appeals or appeals were used incorrectly.	Presentation used rhetorical appeals adequately incorporating at least 2 of 3 appeals.	Presentation used all 3 appeals efficiently.	Presentation used all 3 appeals effectively.
Collaboration <i>Did everyone contribute to the presentation?</i> Did everyone seem well versed in the material?	The teammates never worked well together. It seems as though only a few people worked on the presentation.	The teammates sometimes worked well together. However it seems as though certain people did not do as much work as others.	The teammates worked well together most of the time. And it seems like everyone did work, but some people are carrying the presentation..	The teammates always worked well together. It was evident that all of the group members contributed equally to the presentation.
Organization Was the presentation well organized and easy to follow?	The presentation lacked organization and had little evidence of preparation.	There were minimal signs of organization or preparation.	The presentation had organizing ideas but could have been much stronger with better preparation.	The presentation was well organized, well prepared and easy to follow.
Presentation <i>Did the presenters speak clearly?</i> Did the engage the audience? Was it obvious the material had been rehearsed?	Presenters were unconfident and demonstrated little evidence of planning prior to presentation.	Presenters were not consistent with the level of confidence/preparedness they showed the classroom but has some strong moments	Presenters were occasionally confident with their presentation however the presentation was not as engaging as it could have been for the class.	Presenters were all very confident in the delivery and they did an excellent job of engaging the class. Preparation is very evident.

Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:	Name:
Score: /16				

Appendix 8: Indirect/Direct Characterization Worksheet

Macbeth Characterization Charts

Directions: Use your text to complete the chart below by providing three examples each of direct and indirect characterization for the characters listed in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

Character	Direct Characterization (3 examples)	Indirect Characterization (3 examples)
<i>Macbeth</i>		
<i>King Duncan</i>		
<i>Banquo</i>		
<i>Lady Macbeth</i>		

Appendix 9: Plot Identification Worksheet

Plot Identification in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

Directions: Using the plot elements below, provide 2 brief summaries from *Macbeth* that would accurately represent each plot element.

Plot Element	Events
Exposition (<i>Beginning of story</i>)	1. 2.
Rising Action (<i>Beginning of action</i>)	1. 2.
Climax (<i>Major turning point</i>)	1. 2.
Falling Action (<i>Action after climax</i>)	1. 2.
Resolution (Ending of story)	1. 2.

Appendix 10: Macbeth Re-interpretation Rap/Song Instructions and Grading Rubric

Macbeth Lyrical Battle!

Do you like to spit rhymes? Yes??? No??? Well in the words of Lady Macbeth, “But screw your courage to the sticking place!” and get out your mics! You are to form your own rap group (i.e. #Team Macbeth, Duffie’s Crew, Banquo’s Ballers...blah, blah, blah), and showcase your understanding of Macbeth while getting creative one last time in English IV. Your group will put on a performance of the *Macbeth* tragedy on_____ . So grab your text and get your lyrics together!

Requirements:

- 1) Your group **MUST** have a name and each member **MUST** have a stage name.
- 2) You **MUST** interpret the story of Macbeth, as much as we have read in this class
- 3) Each member in your group **MUST** have a verse.
- 4) The rap song should be at least 2 minutes (no more than 4).
- 5) You **MUST** refrain from using any explicit or inappropriate lyrics (if you choose to do so, your whole group will receive a referral...**TRY ME**).
- 6) Your rap will need to incorporate at least 3 direct quotes from the play (Do not overlook this requirement!)
- 7) You **MUST** have a written draft of your rap/song to turn in to your teacher.
- 8) Your group **MUST** perform your rap/song for the class.

**The winning team will be rewarded handsomely! Good luck!

	1	2	3	4
Rap/Song Rubric	1	2	3	4
Content Did the presentation have valuable material?	Presentations contained little to valuable material.	Presentation had moments where valuable material was present but as a whole content was lacking.	Presentation had a good amount of material and benefited the class	Presentation had an exceptional amount of valuable material and was extremely beneficial to the class.
Collaboration <i>Did everyone contribute to the presentation?</i> Did everyone seem well versed in the material?	The teammates never worked well together. It seems as though only a few people worked on the presentation.	The teammates sometimes worked well together. However it seems as though certain people did not do as much work as others.	The teammates worked well together most of the time. And it seems like everyone did work, but some people are carrying the presentation..	The teammates always worked well together. It was evident that all of the group members contributed equally to the presentation.
Organization Was the presentation well organized and easy to follow?	The presentation lacked organization and had little evidence of preparation.	There were minimal signs of organization or preparation.	The presentation had organizing ideas but could have been much stronger with better preparation.	The presentation was well organized, well prepared and easy to follow.
Presentation <i>Did the presenters speak clearly?</i> Did the engage the audience? Was it obvious the material had been rehearsed?	Presenters were unconfident and demonstrated little evidence of planning prior to presentation.	Presenters were not consistent with the level of confidence/preparedness they showed the classroom but has some strong moments	Presenters were occasionally confident with their presentation however the presentation was not as engaging as it could have been for the class	Presenters were all very confident in the delivery and they did an excellent job of engaging the class. Preparation is very evident

Group Name:	Group Name:	Group Name:
Score: /16	Score: /16	Score: /16
Group Name:	Group Name:	Group Name:
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Group Name:	Group Name:	Group Name:
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Group Name:	Group Name:	Group Name:
Score: /16	Score: /16	Score: /16

Notes

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¹⁹Harris, Frank. "Shakespeare's Love Story: The Sonnets, Part I," in *Shakespearean Criticism*, ed. Sandra L. Williamson, vol. 10 (Detroit: Gale Research, 1990), accessed November 3, 2014,

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³¹*Ibid.*, 17.

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