

Star Wars and Shakespeare: A Unit Overview

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Essential Unit Questions:

How does an author's use of language add meaning?

How does an author transform source material?

Major Core Content Standards integrated into unit (Grades 9-10 Reading Literature):

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).

RL.9-10.7: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment (e.g., Auden's "Musée des Beaux Arts" and Breughel's Landscape with the Fall of Icarus).

RL.9-10.9: Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work (e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare).

Understandings:

At the end of the unit, students will understand that...

- When the purpose of writing changes, the form will often change as well.
- Authors make deliberate choices in language, which impact and add meaning.

Skills:

At the end of the unit, students will be skilled at...

- Analyzing the use of language by an author.
- Identifying iambic pentameter.
- Explaining what changes when the same source material is adapted in various media.
- Performing dramatic scenes by following structural cues (parentheticals, stage directions, etc.).

Knowledge:

At the end of the unit, students will know that...

- Iambic pentameter consists of five "iamb"; each iamb contains an unstressed/stressed syllabic structure.
- Different dramatic texts have different structural components (for example, a screenplay contains "slug lines" to show scene changes).
- Inferences of meaning in a dramatic text often depends on different "helpers" depending on the form (for example, stage directions in a play; parentheticals and narrative action descriptions in a screenplay).
- Different media have different strengths and weaknesses, particularly in its impact on an audience.

Downloadable materials:

- [WSSW Double Entry Journal Instructions](#)
- [WSSW DEJ Template](#)
- [Iambic Lightsabre](#)
- [WSSW Act One Language](#)
- [WSSW Screenplay vs. Play](#)
- [EXIT SLIP Iambic Pentameter](#)
- [WSSW Star Wars Skit Master List](#) (for teacher)
- [WSSW Star Wars Skit Groups TEMPLATE](#) (for teacher)
- [WSSW Star Wars Skit](#) (for students)
- [WSSW Star Wars Radio Drama Cast List](#) (for teacher)
- [WSSW Film vs Radio Drama vs Play](#) (for students)
- [WSSW Final Writing Prompt](#)
- [Kentucky On Demand Writing Rubric](#)

Multimedia Materials:

All links are to Amazon.

- Ian Doescher's [William Shakespeare's Star Wars: Verily, A New Hope](#). For both deep readings and close analysis across the entire text, individual copies of the book will be necessary.
- *Star Wars: A New Hope*. Your best bet is the [recent 2013 release](#) that contains both Blu-Ray and DVD editions of the original trilogy.
- [Star Wars: the Original Radio Drama](#). By using some of the movie's original sound effects, musical cues, and even actors (Mark Hamill and Anthony Daniels), this CD set is much more engaging than a typical audiobook.
- Brian Daley's [Star Wars: The National Public Radio Dramatization](#). This book is out of print, but you can easily find copies to purchase online. Contains the entire radio drama script. One of the activities has students compare the final battle scene from the radio drama audio/script to Doescher's play, the original movie screenplay, and the movie itself.
- Laurent Bouzereau's [Star Wars: The Annotated Screenplays](#). Contains annotated scripts for the entire original trilogy, pre-Special Edition. Although out of print, it still is able to be purchased online. A treasure trove of information on how Lucas's story ideas evolved and how the scripts changed from first to final draft. One of the activities has students compare an excerpt from the screenplay to the same scene in Doescher's play. (If you have trouble getting a copy of the *Star Wars* movie script, there are several sites online with the screenplay posted -- but beware of copyright infringement and downloading unwelcome mynock!)

Transfer Task (final cumulative unit project):

Timed writing essay, comparing and contrasting Doescher's version of *Star Wars* to one of the other mediums (movie, screenplay, radio drama).

Lesson Plan Descriptions:

- [Unit Overview](#)
- [Unit & Lesson Timeline](#) (Lesson Plan Days 5, 7, and 10 are in-class Reading Days and do not have special instructional plans)
- [Lesson Plan Day 1](#)
- [Lesson Plan Day 2](#)
- [Lesson Plan Day 3](#)

- [Lesson Plan Day 4](#)
- Lesson Plan Day 5- In Class Reading
- [Lesson Plan Day 6](#)
- Lesson Plan Day 7- In Class Reading
- [Lesson Plan Day 8 & 9](#)
- Lesson Plan Day 10- In Class Reading
- [Lesson Plan Day 11](#)
- [Lesson Plan Day 12](#)
- [Lesson Plan Day 13 & 14](#)
- [Lesson Plan Day 15](#)
- [Skype Reflection & Final Thoughts](#)

About the Author

ADAM WATSON (NBCT) has been an educator since 2005. From 2006 to 2014, he was an English teacher at South Oldham High School (Crestwood, KY, just outside of Louisville), where he was voted Teacher of the Year in 2009. Watson's educational accomplishments, particularly in technology, have earned him various accolades, such as the cover story of Kentucky Teacher (April 2009) and a mention in NCTE's international newsletter INBOX (February 2009). He has written articles for NCTE's Classroom Notes Plus (October 2010) and the British user-created book profile website Book Drum ([June 2011](#)). In 2011, Watson founded and co-lead the teacher-centered edtech support community for his district, the [Oldham County Technology Initiative](#), or OCTI. In July 2014, Watson became the first District Technology Integration Coach of Shelby County (KY). Contact Adam via Twitter [@watsonedtech](#) or email at adam.watson@shelby.kyschools.us

When not teaching or watching the Star Wars saga, Adam enjoys writing [plays](#), poetry, and other fiction.