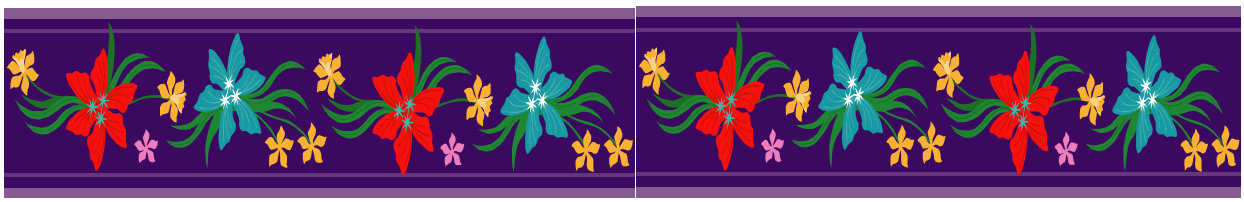


Ophelia's Perfect Picture:

Literary Symbolism through Characterization

Developed by: Julie Vivian, NBCT
jvivian@dadeschools.net

Miami Coral Park Senior High School
Mail Code: 7271
Phone: (305) 226-6565
Fax: (305) 553-4658

For information concerning IMPACT II opportunities,
Adapter and Disseminator grants, please contact:
The Education Fund
305-892-5099, Ext. 18
e-mail: lvalle@educationfund.org
web site: www.educationfund.org

Table of Contents

Program Overview 3

Objectives:

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (through 2013) 5

Common Core State Standards (beginning 2013-2014) 6

Lesson Activities

Lesson Plan Timeline 8

Assignment Guidelines 9

Presentation sample slides 10

Character Dialogue analysis handout 14

Project Rubric 15

Judges' Ballots 16

Materials 17

Resources 18

Student Work Samples 19

Program Overview

Ophelia's Perfect Picture is an engaging group project allowing Language Arts, Social Sciences, or Performing Arts students to competitively connect literary themes using photography. Students will brainstorm themes based on character, for example, the tormented Ophelia from Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* and attempt to recreate the symbolism of her character through created images around the school site. Chosen photos will then be clarified and explained in a culminating written analysis that will ultimately be judged by peers, colleagues, and parents in a school-based competition.

Students will be able to relate character's purpose to thematic intent as they learn how to visually recreate plot and characterization without relying on sole written analysis. Taking pictures of school materials, events, and people require students to creatively attach a more abstract view of a complex character through typical, everyday objects. This skill enables students to more insightfully analyze literature without the usual superficial responses, which is a necessary skill at the post-secondary level. They will also be able to master the required components of descriptive writing; their written analyses need not only be creative, but accurately written in order to persuade others to vote for their image.

Students will venture around campus, photographing candid or posed images observed and/or created that they deem suitable to visually represent the character of Ophelia. Examples might include photos of a flower floating in a puddled water fountain, or notebook paper blowing down the stairs while a student attempts to retrieve it. Though multiple images will be photographed, groups will then debate and select a single image from their "field trip" around school, and complete a thorough descriptive written analysis explaining the thematic connections between picture and character. The floating flower image, for example, could be connected as a symbolic representation of Ophelia's frailty and vulnerability of being overpowered by outside forces. The instructor will subsequently print out all final images as standard 4"x6" glossy photos with matching written pieces to be displayed at a central location in school, such as a bulletin board

or classroom area, where other classes can vote on the "winner" - that is, the best image and description of the assigned character. Images will also be placed on the class website to involve parents and teachers in the voting process and ultimately encourage the students' efforts to most accurately depict a character's theme through photographic symbolism. Too often, students are used to the typical question-and-answer method of literary analysis; this activity not only allows physical movement and extensive brainstorming, but requires a more insightful approach to creatively summarize characterization through images rather than solely words.

This project ultimately relates the imagery of digital photography with the creativity of literary interpretation…students are able to view classic literature *through a different lens.*

Objectives

Next Generation Sunshine State Standards/Reading and Language Arts, grades 11–12 (used through 2012-2013)

LA.1112.1.6.2: The student will listen to, read, and discuss familiar and conceptually challenging text;
LA.1112.1.7.2: The student will analyze the authors purpose and/or perspective in a variety of text and understand how they affect meaning;
LA.1112.1.7.3: The student will determine the main idea or essential message in grade-level or higher texts through inferring, paraphrasing, summarizing, and identifying relevant details and facts;
LA.1112.2.1.4: The student will analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, providing textual evidence for the identified theme;
LA.1112.2.1.7: The student will analyze, interpret, and evaluate an author's use of descriptive language (e.g., tone, irony, mood, imagery, pun, alliteration, onomatopoeia, allusion), figurative language (e.g., symbolism, metaphor, personification, hyperbole), common idioms, and mythological and literary allusions, and explain how they impact meaning in a variety of texts with an emphasis on how they evoke reader's emotions;
LA.1112.3.1.1: The student will prewrite by generating ideas from multiple sources (e.g., brainstorming, notes, journals, discussion, research materials or other reliable sources) based upon teacher-directed topics and personal interests;
LA.1112.3.2.2: The student will draft writing by establishing a logical organizational pattern with supporting details that are substantial, specific, and relevant;
LA.1112.3.3.3: The student will revise by creating precision and interest by elaborating ideas through supporting details (e.g., facts, statistics, expert opinions, anecdotes), a variety of sentence structures, creative language devices, and modifying word choices using resources and reference materials (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus) to select more effective and precise language; a
LA.1112.3.3.4: The student will revise by applying appropriate tools or strategies to evaluate and refine the draft (e.g., peer review, checklists, rubrics).
LA.1112.3.5.1: The student will prepare writing using technology in a format appropriate to the purpose (e.g., for display, multimedia);
LA.1112.3.5.3: The student will sharing with others, or submitting for publication.
LA.1112.4.2.3: The student will write informational/expository essays that speculate on the causes and effects of a situation, establish the connection between the postulated causes or effects, offer evidence supporting the validity of the proposed causes or effects, and include introductory, body, and concluding paragraphs;
LA.1112.5.2.3: The student will use research and visual aids to deliver oral presentations that inform, persuade, or entertain, and evaluates ones own and others oral presentations according to designed rubric criteria;
LA.1112.5.2.4: The student will use appropriate eye contact, body movements, and voice register for audience engagement in formal and informal speaking situations;

LA.1112.6.4.1: The student will select and use appropriate available technologies (e.g., computer, digital camera) to enhance communication and achieve a purpose (e.g., video, presentations); and
LA.1112.6.4.2: The student will routinely use digital tools for publication, communication and productivity.

Common Core State Standards/English Language Arts Standards 11/12 (effective 2013-2014)

RL.11-12.2. Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
W.11-12.1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

- Introduce precise, knowledgeable claim(s), establish the significance of the claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that logically sequences claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
- Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly and thoroughly, supplying the most relevant evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level, concerns, values, and possible biases.
- Use words, phrases, and clauses as well as varied syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

W.11-12.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

- Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
- Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
- Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.

- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

W.11-12.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
W.11-12.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

- SL.11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.
- Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
- Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

SL.11-12.3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, assessing the stance, premises, links among ideas, word choice, points of emphasis, and tone used.
SL.11-12.4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
SL.11-12.5. Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.
L.11-12.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.
- Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations

Lesson Plan/Timeline:

Though this project could be applied to any major literary character, historical event, or dramatic representation, this specific lesson plan describes the timeline occurring after the class' completion of the Shakespearean tragedy, *Hamlet*.

Weeks 1-3: students will read and analyze play, paying special attention to plot events and reactions and traits of major characters.

Week 3/1st block class: students will be assigned the analysis of the Ophelia character, a particularly vulnerable female whom students traditionally empathize with, for group brainstorming on final character analysis. Class will review Powerpoint presentation of various historical perspectives of her character, including artistic depictions and written critical commentary. Individually (maybe for homework) students will complete the Character Dialogue Analysis graphic organizer to integrate textual evidence with the overall meaning. This handout helps combine both personal opinions of Ophelia with the actual evidence based on the text.

Week 3/2nd block of class: Groups will receive assignment guidelines and, armed with debated character traits, will share a camera as they travel around the school site photographing images, scenes, and settings representative of Ophelia's character. They may photograph still images, create a stage image with props or costumes, or manipulate photos with photo editing software such as Paint or Photoshop. Groups will ultimately select and prewrite, edit, and present a written persuasive analysis of their chosen image, connecting image to theme.

Week 4: school-site and online voting begins. Other students and faculty may vote (through paper ballot) on the image they deem most representative of image and written description. Both the winning groups with 1. the most votes, and 2. Teachers' choice, will be awarded the oh-so-valuable homework pass.

Lesson Activities: Assignment Guidelines Student Handout

Ophelia's Perfect Picture

Your mission:
Your group of four will determine the character traits of Shakespeare's Ophelia in *Hamlet*. Your group will then seek to symbolically capture her essence through:
1) a photograph representative of Ophelia's character, taking into consideration her role in the play, and,
2) an effective typed one/two paragraph explanation, according to the rules of the 3rd quarter reaction paper rubric, justifying your group's validation for the chosen photo.

All photos and rationales are due at the end of next class.

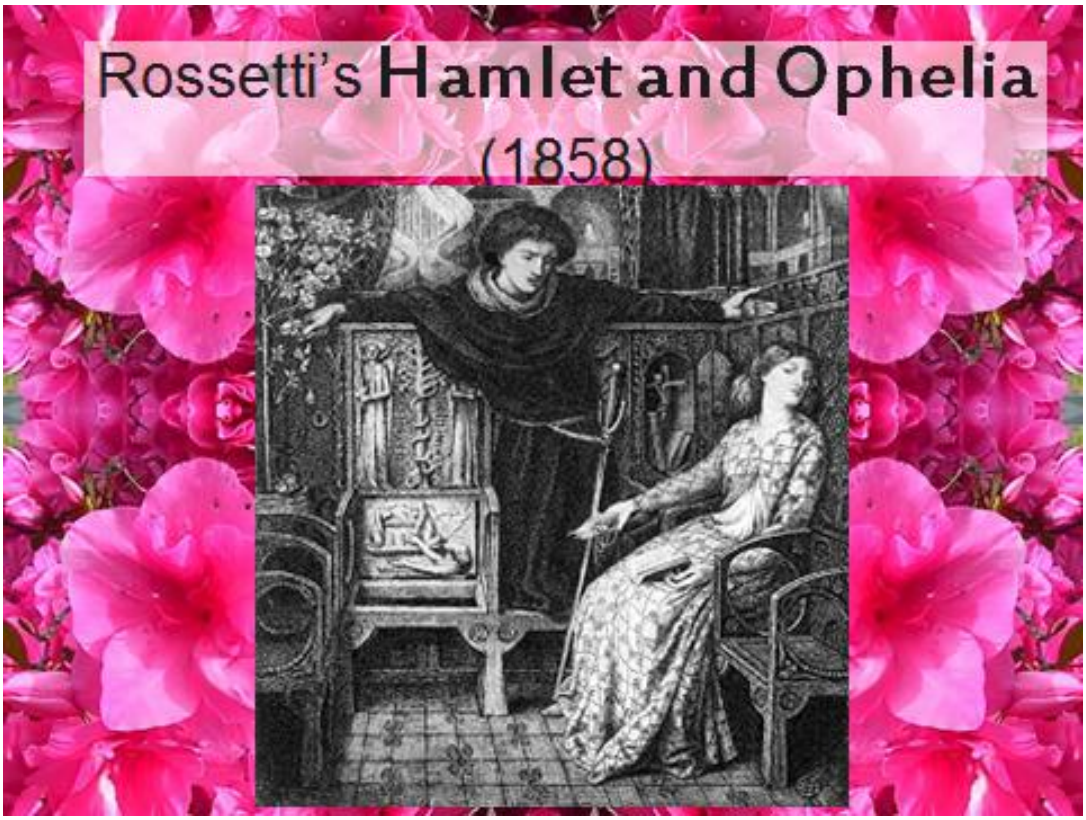
Though many may be taken, only *one* photograph per group will be submitted for grading and judging, based on both the accuracy of literary symbolism and the written rationale.

All submitted group photos will be placed in the classroom *and* online for judging during the next week. The group with the highest number of votes will earn an extra credit A and the group judged "Teacher's Choice" from a panel of 12th grade instructors will earn **2** extra credit As.

Lesson Activities/Powerpoint slides of instructor-led introduction

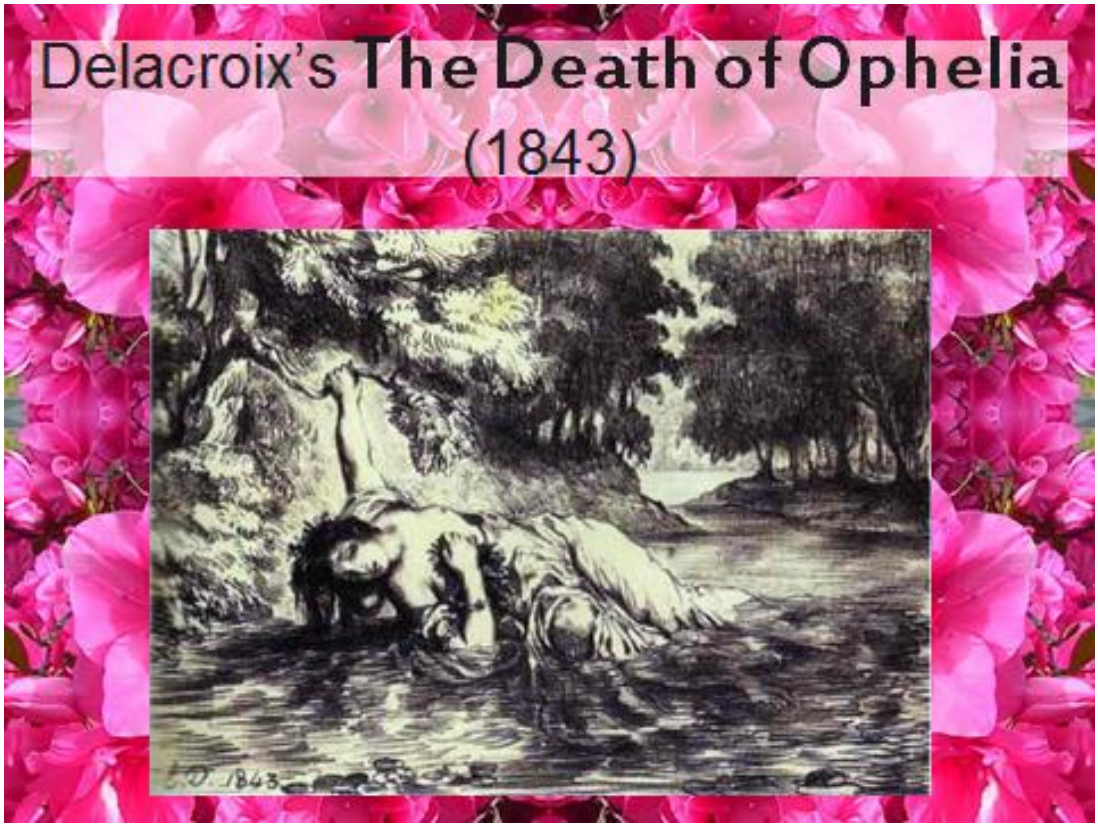
1.

2.

3. 
Rossetti's Hamlet and Ophelia
(1858)

4.
Vrubel's Hamlet and Ophelia
(1883)

5.
Austin's Hamlet Play Scene
(1897)
www.russianpaintings.net

6. 
Delacroix's The Death of Ophelia
(1843)

7.
Delacroix's The Death of Ophelia
2 (1843)

8.
Millais's Ophelia (1851)

Lesson Activities/Dialogue Analysis Handout

Name:_____ Date:_____ Per._____

Shakespeare's HAMLET dialogue analysis

Character of: Ophelia

Directions: find examples of key dialogue points, and indicate the deeper meanings the dialogue reveals about the character's intentions, personal history, relationship toward other characters, and motivations.

Dialogue	Textual location (Act/Scene/Lines)	Deeper Meaning (So What?)

Lesson Activities/Project Rubric

Your grade will be based on:

A - *meeting/exceeding all minimum requirements:*
Photo: multiple photographs taken, insightful thematic connection of symbolism in selection, appropriate and varied location choices, clear and descriptive subject, diverse and creative costuming options
Written rationale: minimum two paragraph explanation completed thoroughly and accurately with no spelling or fact errors in correct syntactical structure, appropriate plot portrayal with connections to meaning, effective presentation of theme and symbolic elements
B - *meeting all minimum requirements:*
Photo: multiple photographs taken, accurate thematic connection of symbolism in selection, appropriate location choices, clear and descriptive subject, creative costuming options
Written rationale: minimum two paragraph explanation completed thoroughly and accurately with no more than two spelling or fact errors in correct syntactical structure, appropriate plot portrayal with connections to meaning, effective presentation of theme and occasional discussion of symbolic elements
C - *meeting most minimum requirements:*
Photo: little choice in photographs taken, average thematic connection of symbolism in selection, location does not clearly explain theme, vague subject, unvaried costuming options
Written rationale: minimum paragraph explanation superficially completed with no more than three spelling or fact errors in correct syntactical structure, nondescriptive plot portrayal with little connection to meaning, general presentation of theme and vague discussion of symbolic elements
D - *meeting some minimum requirements:*
Photo: poor choice in photographs taken, minimal thematic connection of symbolism in selection, location does not clearly explain theme, vague subject, unvaried costuming options
Written rationale: brief or incomplete explanation superficially completed with multiple instances of spelling or fact errors and incorrect syntactical structure, inaccurate plot portrayal with little connection to meaning, general presentation of theme and cursory discussion of symbolic elements
F - *not meeting most minimum requirements:*
Photo: no choice in photographs taken, lacking thematic connection of symbolism in selection, location and/subject is irrelevant to theme
Written rationale: missing or grossly incomplete or off-topic explanation superficially completed with egregious spelling and/or fact errors and incorrect syntactical structure, inaccurate plot portrayal with no connection to meaning, general presentation of theme and incomplete discussion of symbolic elements; little to no effort presented

Lesson Activities/Judges' Ballots

Ophelia's Perfect Picture Guest Ballot:

please drop off in room 4226

Reminder: please choose the photo that best represents the character of Hamlet's Ophelia as supported by attached written explanation. Do not merely select photo based solely on how *pretty* it is!

Photo #:_____

Why did you select this photo? _____

_____

_____

Materials

- texts of Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* (though dynamic characters from any literary work or historical event may be used)
- a digital camera with digital upload capability, (some students are even able to use their cell phone cameras)
- assorted costumes, including a mix of hats, wigs, gowns, glasses, and props, (I purchase many of my costumes and props at Party City seasonal sales, costumeexpress.com and even garage sales.)
- a memory card reader and computer, (though students may email their photos from home, as well)
- multiple printed copies of student photos, (quick and inexpensive at Walgreens, Costco, etc.)
- poster board for school displays of photos,
- paper ballots for class balloting and peer commentary

Resources

Additional information regarding character criticism of Ophelia can be found at the sites listed below. They can be used in addition to the Powerpoint sample artwork to further demonstrate history's perception of her essence. These ideas provide students with varied perspectives to be able to create their own photos.

1. http://www.elizabethbeagle.com/hamlet_files/page0002.htm

2. http://www.westminstercollege.edu/myriad/index.cfm?parent=2514&detail=2679&content=2680

3. http://www.victorianweb.org/gender/ophelia.html

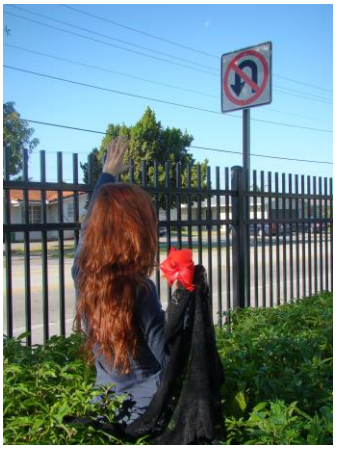
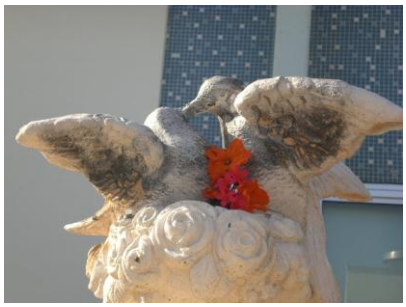
Student Work Samples (text shortened for space)

Winning photo: popular vote

In the first half of the picture, the woman is trying to prevent the suicide of a man she cares about dearly. The man is symbolic of Hamlet, who upon discovering the cause of death of his father, begins a self-destructive behavioral pattern, separating himself from his family and lover, delving deeper into madness and even going as far as to kill Ophelia's relatively innocent father, Polonius. The man in the picture also represents Ophelia's father who, though not purposefully, is ultimately dead.

The second half of the picture shows the woman stepping up to her own suicide. The feelings of fear and isolation show on her face as she feels dejected and alone due to the suicide of the man whom she loved. His suicide breaks her and pushes her to her own destruction, which was also the case with Ophelia. Not only was Ophelia rejected by Hamlet, but her father also was murdered by that same lover. Her father's death pushed her over the edge, and she clearly went mad from the excessive stress she was under. Ophelia in the end committed what many considered to be suicide. The woman in the photo is about to follow in her footsteps.

Winning photo: teachers' choice

Ophelia's character is marked with distinctive features of sorrow, lunacy and madness. She is delicate and feminine as she once was before her father died, represented by the picture and the flowers on her head. The picture represents her final scene at the brook singing and swinging by a tree before it falls. She is not absorbed with the sorrow of dying and seems as if she has lost her mind. At this stage in the play, she is overcome by grief and masks it with maniacal laughter and what seems to be a pleasantry of what a lady is likely to do. This is all peculiar because in the course of recent events that just occurred, it is not common to seem so carefree about the world. The flowers on her hair symbolize the loss of the person that she used to be.

Additional Student Work Photos