

9.1.2

Lesson 3

Introduction

In this lesson, students continue to analyze “Letter One” from Rilke’s *Letters to a Young Poet*, pages 9–12 (from “So, dear sir, I can’t give you any advice” to “I, as a stranger, really am. Yours very truly, Rainer Maria Rilke”), in which Rilke offers the young poet a final piece of advice. Students examine Rilke’s development of central ideas. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Determine one of Rilke’s central ideas and analyze its development over the course of “Letter One”.

For homework, students review “Letter One” and annotate for passages that create tone in the letter. Also for homework, students review and expand their notes and annotations in preparation for the End-of-Unit Assessment.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.9-10.2	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
Addressed Standard(s)	
L.9-10.4.a	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 9–10 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine one of Rilke’s central ideas and analyze its development over the course of “Letter

One”.
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a central idea in the text (e.g., the nature of beauty). Analyze how Rilke develops this central idea over the course of the text (e.g., Rilke develops the central idea that beauty lies within the individual by claiming that “the creator must be a world for himself” (p. 10), and that creation can only come from a deep internal need to create).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> emphasis (n.) – special stress laid upon something earnestly (adv.) – doing something with serious intention reverence (n.) – a feeling or attitude of deep respect
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> renounce (v.) – give up voluntarily
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> destiny (n.) – the things that someone or something will experience in the future devoted (adj.) – given over or directed to a cause, enterprise, or activity

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p>Standards & Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RI.9-10.2, L.9-10.4.a Text: <i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> by Rainer Maria Rilke, “Letter One,” pp. 9–12 <p>Learning Sequence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Reading and Discussion Quick Write 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 15% 60% 15%

5. Closing

5. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Central Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 9.1.1 Lesson 5) – students may need additional blank copies
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 9.1.1 Lesson 1)

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
▶	Indicates student action(s).
💬	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
❗	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.9-10.2. Students continue to explore “Letter One” from Rilke’s *Letters to a Young Poet* pages 9–12 (from “So, dear sir, I can’t give you any advice” to “I, as a stranger, really am. Yours very truly, Rainer Maria Rilke”) and determine what central ideas Rilke develops and how he develops them.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied focus standard RL.9-10.3 or RI.9-10.3 to their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) texts. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson’s AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied the focus standard to their AIR texts.

- ▶ Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied the focus standard to their AIR texts from the previous lesson’s homework.

Instruct students to take out their responses to the homework assignment from the previous lesson. (Write a paragraph in response to the following prompt: Where, according to Rilke, should the poet find beauty?) Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk in pairs about their responses to the homework prompt.

- Rilke believes anything can be beautiful as long as the urge to write about it comes from within. He tells the young poet to write about his “sorrows and desires” and to draw inspiration from a “turning-within” (p. 7). Rilke also advises the younger poet to write about more ordinary things like “the Things around [him],” his dreams, and objects he remembers (p. 7). This means Rilke believes that the poet can find beauty within himself and in his everyday life to write about, as long as he does so with “heartfelt, silent, humble sincerity” (p. 7) and it is because he “*must*” write (p. 6).

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

60%

Instruct students to form pairs. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text for the central idea as they read and discuss, using the code CI. Remind students to keep track of central ideas in the text using the Central Ideas Tracking Tool.

- ① If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the focus excerpt for the lesson.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

What is the central idea in “Letter One”?

Instruct student pairs to read pages 9–12 of “Letter One” from *Letters to a Young Poet* by Rainer Maria Rilke (from “So, dear sir, I can’t give you any advice” to “I, as a stranger, really am. Yours very truly, Rainer Maria Rilke”), and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *emphasis* means “special stress laid upon something,” *earnestly* “doing something with serious intention,” and *reverence* means “a feeling or attitude of deep respect.”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *emphasis*, *earnestly*, and *reverence* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *destiny* means “the things that someone or something will experience in the future” and *devoted* means “to have used (time, money, energy, attention, etc.) for (something).”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *destiny* and *devoted* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

① Remind students to use the annotation codes, starring passages that include repeated ideas.

How does Rilke’s advice at the beginning of the excerpt develop his ideas about the creation of poetry?

- Rilke advises the young poet to look within himself to answer the “question of whether [he] *must* create” (p. 9), developing the idea that Rilke believes the creation of good poetry or art comes out of a deep inner need to write or create.

How does Rilke use specific words and phrases on pages 9–10 to refine his ideas about being a poet?

- Student responses may include:
 - Rilke uses the phrase “called to be an artist” and the word “destiny” (p. 9) to refine the idea that being a poet is a calling.
 - Rilke refers to the “burden” (p. 9) and the “greatness” (p. 10) of being a poet, suggesting that this calling is both difficult and at the same time rewarding.

What ideas about “reward” does Rilke develop?

- Rilke develops the idea that “reward ... from outside” should not matter to a creator (p. 10). A creator should “be a world unto himself” meaning he should not look for reward or praise outside of himself (p. 10).

How does Rilke’s advice on pages 9–10 develop a central idea in the text?

- Student responses should include:
 - Rilke’s advice to “go into yourself” and “see how deep the place is from which your life flows” (p. 9) suggests that poetry is personal, reflective work.
 - Rilke also says poets should not expect “reward” (p. 10) from outside.
 - Both of these ideas refine the central idea about beauty by suggesting that beauty lies within the individual.
- ① If students struggle to identify a central idea, encourage them to review their starred annotations to find ideas that Rilke repeats in several places.
- ① It may be helpful to remind students of their work with beauty in 9.1.1 Lesson 9. Consider giving students the term “the meaning of beauty” as a tool for discussing the reflections about beauty and art which students explore throughout the module.

How does Rilke’s statement, that those who can live without writing “shouldn’t write at all,” refine a central idea?

- Rilke’s belief that people who feel they can live without writing “shouldn’t write at all” (p. 10) develops the central idea of the nature of beauty because creation must come from an inner need, from inside the individual.

Remind students to annotate their texts for a central idea, using the code CI.

How does Rilke’s statement that those who can live without writing “shouldn’t write at all help to make meaning of the word “renounce”?

- Because Rilke believes that if someone feels like they could live if they did not write, then they must not “write at all” (p. 10), then “renounce” must mean to give up something.
- ① If necessary, provide the following definition: *renounce* means “give up voluntarily.”
 - ▶ Students write the definition of *renounce* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to the application of L.9-10.4.a through the process of using context to make meaning of unknown words.

What impact does Rilke believe that “self-searching” will have on the young poet, even if he gives up poetry?

- Rilke believes that even if the young poet gives up writing poems that the “self-searching” will have had a positive impact, because it will help his life “find its own paths from there” (p. 10). Even if he does renounce poetry, looking inside himself will help him to understand himself and find his path in life.

Paraphrase Rilke’s final piece of advice for the poet.

- Keep growing and do not look to others for answers about your life. Only you have the answers.
- ① Consider reminding students of their work with paraphrasing in 9.1.1 Lesson 4.

What central idea does Rilke’s advice to the poet develop?

- This develops the central idea of the meaning of beauty, because Rilke encourages the young poet to not look “outside and wait[] for outside answers” (p. 11) that only the young poet’s “innermost feeling” (p. 11) can answer. In other words, he should not place value on outside opinions but look inside himself, because beauty can only come from within the individual.

- ① Students may also note identity as an important idea. In 9.1.2 Lesson 10, students will consider a central idea of individual identity vs. group identification in relation to Rilke’s “Letter One” and David Mitchell’s *Black Swan Green*.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Quick Write

15%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

Determine one of Rilke’s central ideas and analyze its development over the course of “Letter One”.

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses. Remind students to look at their text and notes to find evidence, and to use the Short Response Checklist and Rubric to guide their written responses.

- ▶ Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.

- ① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition students to the independent Quick Write.

- ▶ Students independently answer the prompt, using evidence from the text.
- ☞ See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to review “Letter One” and annotate it by marking passages that create tone in the letter.

Also for homework, instruct students to review and expand their notes and annotations in preparation for the Mid-Unit Assessment.

Homework

Review “Letter One” and annotate it by marking passages that create tone in the letter.

Review and expand your notes and annotations in preparation for the Mid-Unit Assessment.

Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Identify the central ideas that you encounter throughout the text. Trace the development of those ideas by noting how the author introduces, develops, or refines these ideas in the texts. Cite textual evidence to support your work.

Text:	<i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> by Rainer Maria Rilke
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Page / Paragraph #	Central Ideas	Notes and Connections
Page 10	Meaning of beauty: Beauty lies within	Rilke says the “creator” should not rely on “what reward might come from outside.” Instead he says the creator must be a “world for himself.” This suggests that beauty is not dependent on others’ perception.
Page 10	Meaning of Beauty: Beauty lies within	Rilke’s final advice in the letter is to “keep growing, silently and earnestly” without “looking outside and waiting for outside answers.” This suggests that the young poet should remember that the only way to create art is to focus on what is within him.