9.1.2 Lesson 6

Introduction

In this lesson, students read pages 26–28 from the "Hangman" chapter of David Mitchell's *Black Swan Green* (from "It must've been around then (maybe that same afternoon)" to "let them kill me tomorrow morning. I mean that"), in which Jason explains in depth his relationship with his stammer, which he calls Hangman. Students investigate Mitchell's use of figurative language and how it develops the relationship between Hangman and Jason. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Mitchell's use of figurative language develop the relationship between Jason and Hangman?

For homework, students write a paragraph in response to the following prompt: How does Mitchell develop Jason's character so far in *Black Swan Green*? Students also continue reading their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) texts through the lens of a focus standard of their choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion on how they applied the focus standard to their texts.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.9-10.3	Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
L.9-10.5.a	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.
Addressed Standard(s)	
None.	

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Assessment

Assessment(s)
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. • How does Mitchell's use of figurative language develop the relationship between Jason and Hangman?
High Performance Response(s)
A High Performance Response should: • Describe Jason's relationship with Hangman (e.g., Jason and Hangman are in a power struggle; the relationship between Jason and Hangman is one of violent struggle; Jason hates Hangman). • Cite specific examples of figurative language that develop their relationship (e.g., By using personification to make "Hangman" (p. 26), Jason's stammer, an evil character that strangles Jason to keep him from speaking, Mitchell develops the relationship between Jason and Hangman as one of constant struggle. The description of Hangman as having "pike lips, broken nose, rhino cheeks, red eyes" (p. 26) shows that Jason hates Hangman and depicts him as a horrible and ugly individual. The very fact that he calls him Hangman creates a sense of danger as Jason associates him with violence and death. In particular, he gives Hangman not only a face but hands which "sink inside my tongue and squeeze my windpipe so nothing works" (p. 26). This creates the impression that Jason and Hangman are in a life and death struggle.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
• hangman (n.) – one who kills criminals by hanging them; a public executioner • pike (adj.) – resembling a pike, a large, long-snouted freshwater fish • deed poll (n.) – a legal document (as to change one's name) made and executed by only one person • outfox (v.) – defeat or trick (someone) by being more intelligent or clever • dimmer (n.) – person lacking in understanding • mangle (v.) – injure severely • A levels (n.) – advanced tests in particular subjects that students in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland take usually at the age of 18 • Bic Biros (n.) – ballpoint pens

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Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
• None.
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
• dictionary (n.) – a reference book that contains words listed in alphabetical order that gives information about the words' meanings, forms, pronunciations, etc. • laughingstock (n.) – a person who is regarded as very foolish or ridiculous • skewered (v.) – pushed a sharp object through

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text:	
• Standards: RL.9-10.3, L.9-10.5.a	
• Text: *Black Swan Green* by David Mitchell, "Hangman," pp. 26–28	
Learning Sequence:	
1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda	1. 5%
2. Homework Accountability	2. 10%
3. Masterful Reading	3. 15%
4. Reading and Discussion	4. 50%
5. Quick Write	5. 15%
6. Closing	6. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 9.1.1 Lesson 1)

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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.
	Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.
▸	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 assessed standards for this lesson: RL.9-10.3 and L.9-10.5.a. Students read pages 26–28 from the "Hangman" chapter of David Mitchell's *Black Swan Green* (from "It must've been around then (maybe that same afternoon)" to "let them kill me tomorrow morning. I mean that"), and analyze how Mitchell uses figurative language to develop the relationship between Hangman and Jason.

- ▸ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability 10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied focus standard RL.9-10.3 or RI.9-10.3 to their 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 student pairs to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Write a paragraph in response to this prompt: How does the tone in this passage develop Jason's character?) Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk in pairs about their responses.

- 🗨 The humorous and sad tone in this passage shows that Jason is very unhappy, but also very intelligent and creative. For example, Jason turns the noun Bunsen burner into a verb, "Bunsen-burnered" (p. 25), suggesting that he is very intelligent and good with words. At the same time,

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Jason's description of envying the "pretty receptionist" (p. 25) for being able to talk to someone without having to look out for "stammer-words" (p. 25)—words that make one stammer—or the ashamed tone of Jason's description of his first stammer reveal how anxious and sad he feels about having a speech impediment.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading 15%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of pages 26–28 of David Mitchell's *Black Swan Green* (from "It must've been around then (maybe that same afternoon)" to "let them kill me tomorrow morning. I mean that"). As students listen, instruct them to focus on Jason's relationship to Hangman. Students engage in evidence-based discussion and complete a brief writing assignment to close the lesson.

ⓘ **Differentiation Consideration**: Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

What is Jason's relationship with Hangman?

- Students follow along, reading silently.

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion 50%

Instruct students to form pairs. Post or project the questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss.

Instruct student pairs to read pages 26–27 of David Mitchell's *Black Swan Green* (from "It must've been around then (maybe that same afternoon)" to "*any*thing's better than getting labeled 'School Stutterboy'") and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *hangman* means "one who kills criminals by hanging them; a public executioner," *pike* means "resembling a pike, a large, long-snouted freshwater fish," *deed poll* means "a legal document (as to change one's name) made and executed by only one person," *outfox* means "to outsmart," *dimmer* means "person lacking in understanding," and *mangle* means "injure severely."

ⓘ Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the class.

- Students write the definitions of *hangman, pike, deed poll, outfox, dimmer,* and *mangle* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

ⓘ **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *dictionary* means "a reference book that contains words listed in alphabetical order that gives information

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about the words' meanings, forms, pronunciations, etc." and *laughingstock* means "a person who is regarded as very foolish or ridiculous."

- Students write the definitions of *dictionary* and *laughingstock* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What name does Jason give his stammer?

- Jason names his stammer "Hangman" (p. 26).

How does Jason describe his stammer?

- Jason describes his stammer as a "hangman" with "pike lips, broken nose" (p. 26) who never sleeps.

ⓘ Consider reminding students of their work with personification in 9.1.1 Lesson 12.

What kind of relationship do Jason and Hangman have?

- The relationship between Jason and Hangman is one of violence and struggle. Hangman uses his "snaky fingers" to get ahold of Jason's tongue and "squeeze" Jason's windpipe so that "nothing'll work" (p. 26)—this is how Hangman makes Jason stammer. Hangman also keeps Jason from saying words that start with certain letters.

How does Jason *outfox* Hangman?

- Student responses should include:
  - Jason outfoxes Hangman by "think[ing] one sentence ahead," so he can avoid "stammer-words" (p. 27) and replace them with non-stammer-words.
  - Jason "pretends" he does not know the answer to questions the teacher asks if the answer is a "stammer-word" (p. 27).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to form pairs and read pages 27–28 (from "That's something I've always *just* about avoided" to "let them kill me tomorrow morning. I mean that") and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *A levels* means "advanced tests in particular subjects that students in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland take usually at the age of 18" and *Bic Biros* means "ballpoint pens."

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ⓘ Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the class.

- Students write the definitions of *A levels* and *Bic Biros* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

ⓘ **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *skewered* means "pushed a sharp object through."

- Students write the definition of *skewered* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Why does Jason fear reading in front of the class?

- Jason fears reading in front of the class because he does not want anyone to know he has a stammer, or call him "'School Stutterboy'" (p. 27).

How does Mitchell's use of figurative language to describe Jason's fear develop the tone of the text?

- Mitchell uses the phrase "spreading round the school like a poison-gas attack" (p. 27) to describe Jason's fear of how quickly his secret will be let out. This image creates a humorous tone because the image of a "poison-gas attack" (p. 27) in this context is so extreme, but it also reveals how worried Jason is, and so creates a tone that is anxious as well as humorous.

ⓘ Consider using the image of news about Jason's stutter "spreading round the school like a poison-gas attack" (page 27) to teach or review *simile*: "a figure of speech that expresses the resemblance of one thing to another of a different category, usually introduced by *as* or *like*."

ⓘ Consider drawing students' attention to their application of standard L.9-10.5.a through the process of interpreting figurative language.

Why does the boy in Pete Redmarley's story "head-butt" his desk?

- The boy does this to "skewer[]" (p. 28) his eyes and kill himself so he cannot take his A levels, because his parents put him under so much pressure to get As.

How does Peter Redmarley's story develop Jason's relationship with Hangman?

- Pete Redmarley's story develops Jason's relationship with Hangman by making it clear how serious the situation is when Jason says he would rather "kill Hangman like that" (p. 28) than let Hangman "kill" (p. 28) him by embarrassing him in front of his classmates.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Activity 5: Quick Write 15%

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

How does Mitchell's use of figurative language develop the relationship between Jason and Hangman?

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 Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

- Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.

ⓘ 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 6: Closing 5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to write a paragraph in response to the following prompt:

How does Mitchell develop Jason's character in the excerpts of *Black Swan Green* you have read so far?

Ask students to use this lesson's vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses. Also remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

Also for homework, students should continue reading their AIR texts. Beginning with this lesson, students are no longer assigned a focus standard. Instead, students choose any of the AIR standards that have been introduced so far in this module. Instruct students to choose one of the standards and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

- Students follow along.

ⓘ Students have been introduced to the following AIR standards: RL and RI.9-10.1, RL and RI.9-10.2, and RL and RI.9-10.3. Students may choose any of these standards as the focus for this AIR homework.

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Homework

Write a paragraph in response to the following prompt:

How does Mitchell develop Jason's character in the excerpts of *Black Swan Green* you have read so far?

Use this lesson's vocabulary wherever possible in your written responses. Use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide your written responses.

Continue to read your Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) text through the lens of a focus standard of your choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion on how you applied your chosen focus standard to your text.

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