

## 9.1.2

## Lesson 8

## Introduction

In this lesson, students read pages 145–148 of “Solarium” from *Black Swan Green* by David Mitchell (from “‘A young man needs to learn when a woman’” to “‘My glass is empty.’ The last drops were the thickest”), in which Madame Crommelynck and Jason discuss two of Jason’s poems and then discuss the source and meaning of beauty. Students analyze how the exchange between Jason and Madame Crommelynck develops the text’s central ideas. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write Response at the end of the lesson: How does Mitchell introduce and develop a central idea in this excerpt?

For homework, students complete the Character Interactions Tool to analyze the conversation between Jason and Madame Crommelynck in greater detail.

## Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.9-10.2	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail 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, b	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 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.</li> <li>b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., <i>analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy</i>).</li> </ul>

## 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"> <li>How does Mitchell introduce and develop a central idea in this excerpt?</li> </ul>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a central idea introduced and developed in the excerpt (e.g., the meaning of beauty).</li> <li>Analyze how Mitchell introduces and develops a central idea (e.g., Mitchell introduces the idea of the meaning of beauty through Madame Crommelynck's critique of the poem "Back Gardens." She says that "[b]eautiful words ruin [Jason's] poetry" (p. 147), to suggest that Jason should use fewer words for the sake of making his poems beautiful. Mitchell further develops the central idea of the meaning of beauty through an in-depth conversation between Madame Crommelynck and Jason about the source and meaning of beauty. Madame Crommelynck tells Jason that "[b]eauty is <i>immune</i> to definition" (p. 148) and explains how difficult it is to understand beauty and create beautiful poetry.).</li> </ul>

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>liberation (n.) – the act or process of freeing someone or something from another's control</li> <li>sentimentality (n.) – the quality of relying on or feeling emotion especially in an excessive way</li> <li>robust (adj.) – strongly or stoutly built</li> <li>disintegrate (v.) – to break apart into many small parts or pieces</li> <li>domesticity (n.) – life inside a home; the activities of a family or the people who share a home</li> <li>ludicrous (adj.) – amusing or laughable through obvious absurdity, incongruity, exaggeration, or eccentricity</li> <li>seeped (v.) – flowed or passed slowly through small openings in something</li> <li>christen (v.) – to name and dedicate</li> <li>palate (n.) – the sense of taste</li> <li>precision (n.) – exactness or accuracy</li> <li>inarticulate (adj.) – lacking the ability to express oneself, especially in clear and effective speech</li> </ul>

- fabricated (adj.) – made by skillfully assembling parts or sections
- abstract (n.) – an idea or term considered apart from some material basis or object
- maladroit (adj.) – clumsy, insensitive

#### Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- misconception (n.) – a mistaken understanding
- immune (adj.) – not influenced or affected by something

#### Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)

- giddy (adj.) – playful and silly
- stake (n.) – a pointed stick or post that is pushed into the ground especially to mark a place or to support something
- umbilical cord (n.) – a long, narrow tube that connects an unborn baby to the placenta of its mother
- fatigue (n.) – the state of being very tired

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards: RL.9-10.2, L.9-10.4.a</li> <li>• Text: <i>Black Swan Green</i> by David Mitchell, “Solarium,” pp. 145–148</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>2. Homework Accountability</li> <li>3. Masterful Reading</li> <li>4. Reading and Discussion</li> <li>5. Quick Write</li> <li>6. Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5%</li> <li>2. 10%</li> <li>3. 20%</li> <li>4. 50%</li> <li>5. 10%</li> <li>6. 5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

- Student copies of the Character Tracking Tool (refer to 9.1.1 Lesson 3)—students may need additional blank copies

- 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)
- Copies of the Character Interactions Tool for each student

## 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.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<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: RL.9-10.2. In this lesson, students read and analyze an interaction in which Madame Crommelynck comments on two of Jason's poems and then discusses beauty in poetry. Students engage in evidence-based discussion before completing a brief writing assignment to close the lesson.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

### Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied their focus standard 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 their focus standard to their AIR texts.

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

Instruct student pairs to share the answers they found to the questions from the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Conduct a brief search to answer the following questions that will provide context for references in the next lesson's reading: What is the Falklands War? Who is T. S. Eliot? Who is Simon Bolivar?)

- ▶ Students share the answers they found during their brief searches.

### What is the Falklands War?

- 🗨 The Falklands War was a 10-week conflict between the United Kingdom and Argentina near the southern tip of South America.

### Who is T. S. Eliot?

- 🗨 T. S. Eliot was an American and British author who wrote well-known poems during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### Who is Simon Bolivar?

- 🗨 Simon Bolivar was a political and military leader who played an important role in several countries' struggle for independence from Spain.

## Activity 3: Masterful Reading

**20%**

Have students listen to a masterful reading of pages 145–148 of “Solarium” from *Black Swan Green* (from “A young man needs to learn when a woman” to “The last drops were the thickest”). Instruct students to listen for what Madame Crommelynck teaches Jason about beauty.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posing the following guiding question to guide students in their reading throughout this lesson:

### What do Jason and Madame Crommelynck say about beauty?

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

## Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

**50%**

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

- ① Remind students that they should keep track of central ideas and character development in the text using the Central Ideas Tracking Tool and the Character Tracking Tool.

Provide students with the following definitions: *liberation* means “the act or process of freeing someone or something from another’s control,” *sentimentality* means “the quality of relying on or feeling emotion especially in an excessive way,” *robust* means “strongly or stoutly built,” *disintegrate* means “to break apart into many small parts or pieces,” *domesticity* means “life inside a home, the activities of a family or the people who share a home,” *ludicrous* means “amusing or laughable through obvious absurdity, incongruity, exaggeration, or eccentricity,” and *seeped* means “flowed or passed slowly through small openings in something.”

① 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 *liberation*, *sentimentality*, *robust*, *disintegrate*, *domesticity*, *ludicrous*, and *seeped* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *giddy* means “playful and silly,” *stake* means “a pointed stick or post that is pushed into the ground especially to mark a place or to support something,” and *umbilical cord* means “a long, narrow tube that connects an unborn baby to the placenta of its mother.”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *giddy*, *stake*, and *umbilical cord* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Instruct student groups to read pages 145–146 (from “A young man needs to learn when” to “Once a poem’s left home, it doesn’t care about you”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

**How does Jason feel when Madame Crommelynck reads “Rocks”? Why does he feel this way?**

- 💬 Jason displays mixed emotions, as he is both “giddy with importance” and “[f]earful” (p. 145). He is satisfied that his words captured the attention of an “exotic woman” (p. 145) like Madame Crommelynck. At the same time, he is fearful because he knows Madame Crommelynck might criticize his work.

**What is Madame Crommelynck’s opinion of “Rocks”? How does she believe “Rocks” compares to other poems?**

- 💬 Student responses should include:
  - Although Madame Crommelynck says that Jason still has work to do before he can be the master of his words, she praises “Rocks” (p. 145) for being “robust enough to be criticized” (p. 146). This means that the poem is complex and strong enough to be worth discussing.
  - She says some other weaker poems “disintegrate” (p. 146) at one touch, or that they are not strong enough to be criticized or discussed in a meaningful way.

- ① Students track specific evidence about Madame Crommelynck’s praise and criticism of Jason’s work on a tool they complete for this lesson’s homework.

**What is the meaning of Madame Crommelynck’s reference to Jason’s umbilical cords?**

- 💬 Madame Crommelynck says Jason is “too timid to cut his umbilical cords” (p. 146). This reference to the physical connection between mother and baby represents Jason’s inability to separate himself from his parents and speak honestly, except for in his poems.

**According to Madame Crommelynck what does poetry alone allow Jason to do?**

- 💬 Madame Crommelynck explains that poetry allows Jason to express himself in a way that he does not dare to do in real life. She says, “[h]ere in your poems you do what you do not dare to do ... [i]n reality” (p. 146).
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle to discuss the previous two questions, consider asking the following scaffolding questions:

**What does the italicized word “here” refer to each time each time Madame Crommelynck says it on page 146?**

- 💬 The first two times she says “here,” it refers to Jason’s poetry: “she gave the page a nasty poke” (p. 146). The third time she uses “here,” it describes reality: “she jabbed at the window” (p. 146). The fourth time she uses “here,” it describes Jason’s heart: “She jabbed my heart” (p. 146).

**Summarize what Madame Crommelynck tells Jason in the paragraph in which she repeats the word here.**

- 💬 She tells Jason that poetry allows him to express what is in his heart, but he does not dare to express what is in his heart anywhere except in his poems.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** if students are ready for deeper analysis, consider asking them the following extension question:

**What is the meaning of Jason’s statement “X-rays make me queasy”? How does the statement relate to his experience in the Solarium?**

- 💬 Jason uses the X-ray reference to describe Madame Crommelynck’s analysis of Jason’s poetry and personal life. Having Madame Crommelynck know so much about his life and emotions makes Jason “queasy” (p. 146) or uncomfortable, especially because he is a private person.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to read pages 146–148 (from “‘Back Gardens.’ Madame Crommelynck held up the June Edition” to “‘My glass is empty.’ The last drops were the thickest”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *christen* means “to name and dedicate,” *palate* means “the sense of taste,” *precision* means “exactness or accuracy,” *inarticulate* means “lacking the ability to express oneself, especially in clear and effective speech,” *fabricated* means “made by skillfully assembling parts or sections,” *abstract* means “an idea or term considered apart from some material basis or object,” and *maladroit* means “clumsy or insensitive.”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *christen*, *palate*, *precision*, *inarticulate*, *fabricated*, *abstract*, and *maladroit* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definition: *fatigue* means “the state of being very tired.”

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

**According to Madame Crommelynck, how do beautiful words impact poetry? How does the “palate” reference develop this idea?**

💬 Student responses should include:

- Madame Crommelynck believes that beautiful words “ruin [Jason’s] poetry,” but she believes that poems should have “a touch” of beauty (p. 147).
- She compares reading poetry to eating food when she says the “palate becomes nauseous” (p. 147). Just as too much of a good food or ingredient would make a person sick, too great an emphasis on beauty is unappealing to a reader of poetry.

**What is the “misconception” about poetry that Madame Crommelynck explains to Jason?**

- 💬 Madame Crommelynck says that idiots “labor in th[e] misconception” that “a poem must be beautiful or it is not a poem” (p. 147). She says the “[b]eauty is *not* excellence” (p. 147). In other words, she suggests that many poems make the mistake of thinking that poetry and beauty are the same thing, when in reality, a poem may be excellent without being beautiful.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle to answer the question above, consider asking the following scaffolding question:

**Using context from the text and the structure of the word, what is the meaning of *misconception*?**

- 💬 The word “concept” in *misconception* means “idea,” and the prefix “mis-” means “wrong or incorrect,” so a *misconception* has something to do with a wrong idea. Madame Crommelynck



says that “idiots” mistakenly believe “a poem must be beautiful or it is not a poem,” which confirms that *misconception* (p. 147) is a mistaken understanding of something.

- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.9-10.4.a, b through the process of using context and word parts to make meaning of a word.

**How does the reference to a “magnolia” develop Madame Crommelynck’s idea about beauty?**

- 💬 Madame Crommelynck uses the example of a “magnolia in a moonlight courtyard” (p. 147) to show how poets do not need to create beauty. Just as one would not “paint the flowers” or “affix the flashy-flashy Christmas lights” (p. 147) to a magnolia that is already beautiful in its natural state, a poet does not need to force beauty on a poem.

**How does Madame Crommelynck develop a central idea of the text through the comparison between “the amateur” and “the master”?**

- 💬 “The amateur” (p. 147) tries to make beauty, but “the master” (p. 147) understands that he cannot create beauty. Rather, the master knows “his words [are] just the *vehicle* in who beauty sits” (page. 147). The master realizes he cannot know what beauty is. This comparison develops the central idea of the nature of beauty. In the case of poetry, masters understand that beauty cannot be created. It can only be captured or represented.
- ① Consider explaining to students that because Madame Crommelynck is Belgian, and English is not her first language, her dialogue includes incorrect grammar like, “his words is just.” Students may also notice that she uses words such as “unsufficient” that are not real English words.

**How does the exchange about the definition of beauty develop a central idea?**

- 💬 Jason tries to answer a question about the definition of beauty, but can only come up with a simple definition like “*Beauty’s something that’s beautiful*” (p. 148). Jason ultimately admits that it’s difficult to define beauty, but Madame Crommelynck tells him it is “impossible” to define beauty because it is “*immune to definition*” (p. 148). This exchange develops the nature of beauty as a central idea, confirming that even master artists cannot define beauty.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle to answer the previous question, consider asking the following scaffolding question:

**Madame Crommelynck says beauty is “immune to definition.” Based on the discussion of beauty, what does *immune* mean?**

- 💬 Jason says it is “difficult” (p. 148) to define beauty. Then, Madame Crommelynck says it is “[i]mpossible” (p. 148) to define beauty. Therefore, *immune* in this context must mean that beauty is not able to be defined.

- ① If necessary, provide students with the definition: *immune* means “not influenced or affected by something.”
- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.9-10.4.a through the process of using context as a clue to the meaning of a word.

**How does the phrase “Beauty *is*” refine a central idea? Why does Mitchell use italics for the word *is*?**

💬 Student responses should include:

- Madame Crommelynck says, “When beauty is present, you know” (p. 148). She then provides examples of beauty to explain that beauty is not “*made*” (p. 148). Rather, beauty simply exists: “Beauty *is*” (p. 148). The phrase “Beauty *is*” restates Madame Crommelynck’s belief that artists cannot create beauty, and that beauty already exists in many places.
- Italicizing the word *is* emphasizes Madame Crommelynck’s point that beauty cannot be made; rather, it simply exists.

**Summarize the conversation Madame Crommelynck and Jason have about a potter’s beautiful vase. How does this discussion develop a central idea?**

- 💬 Jason asks if it is possible to create beauty because a potter can “make a beautiful vase” (p. 148). Madame Crommelynck responds that a potter can make a vase but cannot make beauty. She says the potter can only make “an object where the beauty *resides*” (p. 148). Madame Crommelynck’s response refines the idea of the meaning of beauty by clarifying that artists can make art that may be beautiful, but they cannot create beauty on their own.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

## Activity 5: Quick Write

10%

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

**How does Mitchell introduce and develop a central idea in this excerpt?**

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. 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.

- ▶ Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.

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

Transition 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 reread the section of “Solarium” discussed in this lesson and complete the Character Interactions Tool. Instruct students to use this tool to track the interactions between Jason and Madame Crommelynck by recording her praise of Jason’s poems in the first column, her criticism of Jason’s poems in the second column, and Jason’s reactions to her praise or criticism in the third column.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider modeling an entry in each column of the tool or displaying a tool with an entry from each column already completed. A model tool is available in 9.1.2 Lesson 9.

## Homework

Reread pages 142–148 of “Solarium” from *Black Swan Green* (from “‘OPEN UP! OPEN UP!’ holler door knockers” to “‘My glass is empty.’ The last drops were the thickest”) and complete the Character Interactions Tool. Use the Character Interactions Tool to track the interactions between Jason and Madame Crommelynck by recording her praise of Jason’s poems in the first column, her criticism of Jason’s poems in the second column, and Jason’s reactions to her praise or criticism in the third column.

## Model Character Tracking Tool

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Class:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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**Directions:** Use this tool to keep track of character development throughout the module. Trace character development in the texts by noting how the author introduces and develops characters. Cite textual evidence to support your work.

<b>Text:</b>	<i>Black Swan Green</i> by David Mitchell
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Character	Trait	Evidence
Jason	seeks approval	When Madame Crommelynck reads his poem, Jason says, “I felt giddy with importance that my words’d captured the attention of this exotic woman” (p. 145).
Madame Crommelynck	honest/ blunt	Madame Crommelynck tells Jason, “Your ‘sort of’ is annoying” (p. 147).

## Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Class:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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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.

<b>Text:</b>	<i>Black Swan Green</i> by David Mitchell
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Page / Paragraph #	Central Ideas	Notes and Connections
Page 147	Meaning of beauty	Madame Crommelynck says, “the master knows his words is just the vehicle in who beauty sits” (p. 147). This supports Madame Crommelynck’s belief that beauty cannot be created.
Page 148	Meaning of beauty	Madame Crommelynck says “Beauty is immune to definition” (p. 148). She explains to Jason that artists cannot create beauty.

## Character Interactions Tool

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Class:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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**Directions:** Use this tool to track the interactions between Jason and Madame Crommelynck about Jason's poetry.

Praise from Madame Crommelynck	Criticism from Madame Crommelynck	Jason's Thoughts/Reactions