

9.1.2

Unit Overview

“[T]he jewel beyond all price”

Text

Letters to a Young Poet by Rainer Maria Rilke, *Black Swan Green* by David Mitchell

Number of Lessons
in Unit

11

Introduction

In this unit, students continue to develop the skills, practices, and routines to which they were introduced in 9.1.1. Students continue to practice reading closely and annotating texts as they examine Rilke’s *Letters to a Young Poet* and Mitchell’s *Black Swan Green*. Students also continue their work with evidence-based writing and collaborative discussion.

Throughout this unit, students analyze how Rilke and Mitchell each develop central ideas such as the meaning of beauty and individual identity vs. group identification. Students read and analyze “Letter One” from *Letters to a Young Poet* and analyze how Rilke develops the central ideas of the meaning of beauty and individual identity versus group identification. Students also read excerpts of the chapters “Hangman” and “Solarium” from *Black Swan Green* and consider how Mitchell develops and refines the central idea of the meaning of beauty through interactions between Jason Taylor and Madame Crommelynck.

There are two formal assessments in this unit. The Mid-Unit Assessment asks students to analyze the impact of Rilke’s specific word choices on the meaning and tone of “Letter One.” The End-of-Unit Assessment asks students to identify similar central ideas in *Letters to a Young Poet* and *Black Swan Green* and analyze how Rilke and Mitchell develop these central ideas. To scaffold to this End-of-Unit Assessment, students complete the Central Ideas Tracking Tool throughout their reading of the texts.

Literacy Skills and Habits

- Read closely for textual details
- Annotate texts to support comprehension and analysis

- Engage in productive evidence-based conversations about text
- Determine meanings of unknown vocabulary
- Independently preview text in preparation for supported analysis
- Paraphrase and quote relevant evidence from a text

Standards for This Unit

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading	
CCRA.R.9	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
CCS Standards: Reading — Literature	
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.
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.
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).
CCS Standards: Reading — Informational Text	
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.
RI.9-10.3	Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
RI.9-10.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper).
CCS Standards: Writing	
W.9-10.2.a, f	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts,

	<p>and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</p> <p>a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</p> <p>f. 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).</p>
CCS Standards: Speaking & Listening	
SL.9-10.1.b, c	<p>Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues</i>, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p> <p>b. Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.</p> <p>c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.</p>
CCS Standards: Language	
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> <p>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.</p> <p>b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings of parts of speech (e.g., <i>analyze, analysis, analytical; advocate, advocacy</i>).</p>
L.9-10.5.a	<p>Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p> <p>a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text.</p>

Note: Bold text indicates targeted standards that will be assessed in the unit.

Unit Assessments

Ongoing Assessment	
Standards Assessed	CCRA.R.9, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.4, RI.9-10.2, RI.9-10.3, RI.9-10.4, W.9-10.2.a, f, L.9-10.5.a
Description of Assessment	Students participate in reading and discussion, write informally in response to text-based prompts, and present information in an organized and logical manner.

Mid-Unit Assessment	
Standards Assessed	RI.9-10.4, W.9-10.2.a, f
Description of Assessment	Students write a formal, multi-paragraph response to the following prompt: What is the impact of Rilke's specific word choices on the meaning and tone of his letter?

End-of-Unit Assessment	
Standards Assessed	CCRA.R.9, RL.9-10.2, RI.9-10.2, W.9-10.2.a, f
Description of Assessment	Students write a formal, multi-paragraph response to the following prompt: Identify similar central ideas in <i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> and <i>Black Swan Green</i> . How do Rilke and Mitchell develop these similar ideas?

Unit-at-a-Glance Calendar

Lesson	Text	Learning Outcomes/Goals
1	<i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> by Rainer Maria Rilke, “Letter One,” pp. 3–5	In this first lesson of the unit, students listen to a masterful reading of “Letter One” of Rainer Maria Rilke’s <i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> , in which Rilke responds to a young poet’s search for guidance. Next, students reread the excerpt and participate in small-group discussions to analyze how Rilke unfolds important ideas, such as the relationship between criticism and art and the intangible and inexpressible nature of art.
2	<i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> by Rainer Maria Rilke, “Letter One,” pp. 5–9	In this lesson, students continue to analyze “Letter One” from Rilke’s <i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> and explore how Rilke uses metaphor to discuss his ideas about art.
3	<i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> by Rainer Maria Rilke, “Letter One,” pp. 9–12	In this lesson, students continue to read “Letter One” from Rilke’s <i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> , analyzing Rilke’s development of central ideas.
4	<i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> by Rainer Maria Rilke, “Letter One”	In this Mid-Unit Assessment, students use textual evidence from “Letter One” from <i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> by Rainer Maria Rilke to craft a formal, multi-paragraph essay in response to the following prompt: What is the impact of Rilke’s specific word choices on the meaning and tone of his letter?
5	<i>Black Swan Green</i> by David Mitchell, “Hangman,” pp. 24–26	In this lesson, students read an excerpt from “Hangman” in David Mitchell’s <i>Black Swan Green</i> , in which Jason Taylor, the narrator, discusses his struggle with stammering. Students analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
6	<i>Black Swan Green</i> by David Mitchell, “Hangman,” pp. 26–28	In this lesson, students continue to read from “Hangman,” and consider Mitchell’s use of figurative language and how it develops the relationship between Jason and his stutter, which he calls Hangman.

Lesson	Text	Learning Outcomes/Goals
7	<i>Black Swan Green</i> by David Mitchell, “Solarium,” pp. 142–145	In this lesson, students begin their study of “Solarium,” another chapter from the novel <i>Black Swan Green</i> by David Mitchell. Students read and discuss an excerpt in which Jason, the narrator, first meets Madame Crommelynck, the old woman who delivers his poems to be published. In small groups, students analyze how the author develops characters in this excerpt.
8	<i>Black Swan Green</i> by David Mitchell, “Solarium,” pp. 145–148	In this lesson, students continue their work with “Solarium,” analyzing how a discussion between Jason and Madame Crommelynck develops the text’s central ideas.
9	<i>Black Swan Green</i> by David Mitchell, “Solarium,” pp. 149–156	In this lesson, students read excerpts from two of Jason’s visits to the vicarage in “Solarium.” Students analyze how Mitchell refines the central idea of the meaning of beauty and how he introduces and develops a new central idea, that of individual identity vs. group identification, which is also present in other texts from this module.
10	<i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> by Rainer Maria Rilke, “Letter One,” pp. 3–12, <i>Black Swan Green</i> by David Mitchell, “Hangman” and “Solarium,” pp. 24–28 and 142–156	In this lesson, students prepare for the End-of-Unit Assessment by reviewing “Hangman” and “Solarium” from <i>Black Swan Green</i> and “Letter One” from <i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> , tracing the development of central ideas in each text. Students then discuss how the texts address similar central ideas.
11	<i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> by Rainer Maria Rilke, “Letter One,” pp. 3–12, <i>Black Swan Green</i> by David Mitchell, “Hangman” and “Solarium,” pp. 24–28 and 142–156	In this End-of-Unit Assessment, students craft a formal, multi-paragraph essay in response to the following prompt: Identify similar central ideas in <i>Letters to a Young Poet</i> and <i>Black Swan Green</i> . How do Rilke and Mitchell develop these similar ideas?

Preparation, Materials, and Resources

Preparation

- Read and annotate “Letter One” from *Letters to a Young Poet*.
- Read and annotate “Hangman” and “Solarium” from *Black Swan Green*.
- Review the Short Response Rubric and Checklist.
- Review the 9.1.2 Mid-Unit and End-of-Unit Text Analysis Rubrics and Checklists.
- Review all unit standards and post in classroom.
- Consider creating a word wall of the vocabulary provided in all lessons.

Materials and Resources

- Copies of “Letter One” from *Letters to a Young Poet* by Rainer Maria Rilke
- Copies of “Hangman” and “Solarium” from *Black Swan Green* by David Mitchell
- Self-stick notes for students
- Writing utensils including pencils, pens, markers, and highlighters
- Methods for collecting student work: student notebooks, folders, etc.
- Access to technology (if possible): interactive whiteboard, document camera, and LCD projector
- Copies of handouts and tools for each student: see materials list in individual lesson plans
- Copies of the 9.1.2 Mid-Unit and End-of-Unit Text Analysis Rubrics and Checklists
- Copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist
- Copies of the 9.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool
- Copies of the Central Ideas Tracking Tool
- Copies of the Character Tracking Tool