

## 9.2.1

## Lesson 10

### Introduction

In this lesson students will continue their analysis of Emily Dickinson’s poem “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,” and explore how Dickinson develops the central idea of madness through the funeral metaphor. Students will participate in a group gallery walk activity, collaboratively generating observations around the development of a central idea. Through a series of guided questions, students will make meaning of Dickinson’s extended metaphor, of the funeral service (and burial), and consider the speaker’s experience as he/she grapples with a deteriorating mental state and isolation.

Students will continue to work in pairs to support their analysis and discuss observations with the whole class. Students will complete this lesson with a Quick Write that prompts them to consider an emerging central idea of madness.

For homework, students will annotate the poem for evidence of Dickinson’s structural choices, as well as continue their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR).

### Standards

Assessed Standard	
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)	
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).
W.9-10.9.a	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

	a. Apply <i>grades 9–10 Reading standards</i> to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]”).
L.9-10.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

## Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>The learning in this lesson will be captured through a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students will answer the following prompt based on the close reading (citing text evidence and analyzing key words and phrases) completed in the lesson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine a central idea in “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain.” How does this idea emerge and develop stanza by stanza over the course of the poem?</li> </ul>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A central idea of the poem is madness. The speaker is going crazy. The “funeral” (1) is a metaphor and is taking place inside the speaker. The events take place in the speaker’s “brain” (1), the “mind” (8) and the “soul” (10). “Mourners” (2) walk back and forth, there is a service that sounds like a “beating” (7) “drum” (6), that makes the speaker’s mind go numb. The mourners lift a coffin and carry it (9–10). There is a tolling like a bell (12–13), then “silence”(15). Then the speaker falls (18). These events reveal that the speaker is coping with something dark and overwhelming like madness, and is eventually overcome by it. He/She loses his/her ability to think and “reason” (17), and eventually loses his/her ability to know (20).</li> </ul>

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>race (n.) – a group of people related by common history, language, or culture</li> <li>solitary (adj.) – alone</li> </ul>
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- toll (v.) – to cause a large bell to sound slowly and repeatedly (especially for announcing death)

## 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, RL.9-10.4, W.9-10.9.a, L.9-10.5</li> <li>Text: “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,”</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction to Lesson Agenda</li> <li>2. Review of Quick Write</li> <li>3. Homework Accountability</li> <li>4. Masterful Reading</li> <li>5. Reading and Discussion</li> <li>6. Gallery Walk</li> <li>7. Quick Write</li> <li>8. Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5%</li> <li>2. 5%</li> <li>3. 10%</li> <li>4. 5%</li> <li>5. 35%</li> <li>6. 20%</li> <li>7. 15%</li> <li>8. 5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

- Short Response Checklist and Rubric (refer to 9.2.1 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.
	Plain text (no symbol) indicates teacher action.
	<b>Bold text (no symbol) indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<i>Italicized text (no symbol) 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 to Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard in this lesson: RL.9-10.2. In this lesson students will continue their paired analysis of Emily Dickinson's poem "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," working to determine and understand an emerging central idea of madness in the poem.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

## Activity 2: Review of Quick Write

5%

Return students' Quick Writes from Lesson 9 and lead a brief full class discussion about student responses. Ensure that students come away with the understanding that the funeral in the poem is imaginary (in the speaker's brain), yet felt.

- ▶ Students review and discuss their Quick Writes from Lesson 9.
- ① Consider drawing students' attention to L.9-10.5. If students have not identified Dickinson's use of the funeral as a metaphor, ask students to discuss in pairs what kind of figurative language they notice in the poem. After leading a brief whole-class share out, explain to students that Dickinson is using an extended metaphor, and that in today's work with RL.9-10.2, students will begin to consider the figurative meanings of the funeral.

## Activity 3: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they can apply their focus standard, RL.9-10.5, to their text. 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 text.

- ▶ Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied their focus standard (RL.9-10.5) to their AIR text from the previous lesson's homework.

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Instruct students to work in pairs to discuss their response to the homework from the previous lesson: What might the "Box" (9) contain? What evidence from the poem supports your thinking?

- ▶ Students work in pairs, discussing their response to the previous lesson's homework prompt.

- Students may suggest the box contains a dead body, a part of the speaker's brain, mind or soul, or the speaker him/herself.

In their pairs, ask students to consider the following questions to refine their understanding of the homework:

**What action is occurring in stanza 3?**

- The mourners are "lift[ing] a Box" (9) and carrying it across the speaker's "soul" (10).

**What might the "Box" (9) represent? How does the "Box" relate to the metaphor established in the first stanza of the poem?**

- Students should call upon their understanding of Dickinson's funeral metaphor to identify the "Box" (9) as a coffin or casket. Some part of the speaker is being buried.

## Activity 4: Masterful Reading

5%

Introduce the Quick Write assessment (Determine a central idea in "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain." How does this idea emerge and develop stanza by stanza over the course of the poem?). Explain to students that this is the lesson assessment and the focus for today's reading.

- Students read the assessment and listen.

① Display the Quick Write assessment for students to see.

Instruct students to annotate throughout the lesson for evidence of emerging central ideas, using the code CI, just as they did in "The Tell-Tale Heart." This focused annotation supports students' engagement with W.9-10.a, which concerns the use of textual evidence in writing.

Have students listen to a masterful reading of "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," in its entirety. Students will listen to the entire poem at the beginning of each lesson on "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain."

- Students listen, reading silently and following along in their text.

## Activity 5: Reading and Discussion

35%

Instruct students to get into the same pairs as in Lesson 9. Direct pairs to reread stanzas 3–4 and discuss the following questions before sharing out to the class.

### To what is the speaker comparing “space” (12) and “the heavens” (13)?

- 💬 Student responses may include that the speaker is comparing space and the Heavens to a bell.
- ① If students struggle to make this connection, offer the definition of “toll” in line 12, as the steady ringing that a bell makes.

### How does the speaker describe his/her “Being” in stanza 3?

- 💬 Student responses should indicate that the speaker describes him/herself as “Being, but an Ear” (14).

### How does this description refine your understanding of what the speaker is experiencing?

- 💬 Student responses should reflect an understanding that the speaker’s sense of hearing is his/her strongest sense. He/She hears the “toll” or “Bell” of “Space” and “the Heavens.”
- ① This question encourages students to continue to consider the sensory aspects of the poem, as well as the literal and figurative language and structure that combine to reveal a central idea of the speaker’s descent into madness.

### What is the relationship of the speaker to “Silence”?

- 💬 The speaker and silence are “some strange Race.”

### What does the speaker mean by *Race*?

- 💬 The speaker uses the word *Race* to show that he/she and silence are from the same culture or group; they are the same; they are both “strange.”

Lead a brief full class discussion of student responses.

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Before posing the following question, instruct students to review their Quick Write from Lesson 9, noting their explanation of how line 16 contributes to the meaning of the poem.

- ▶ Students review their Quick Write and their response to line 16, “Wrecked, solitary, here –.”

**What might the location of “here” be in the line “Wrecked, solitary, here –” (16)? What makes you think so?**

- Student responses may indicate an understanding that “here” is the speaker’s “Brain” (1). Additionally, students may indicate an understanding that “here” (16) is the speaker’s “Soul” (10) or “Being” (14). The speaker is alone inside him/herself.

Lead a brief full class discussion of student responses.

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Before posing the following questions, instruct students to review their Quick Write from Lesson 9, noting their explanation of how line 18 contributes to the meaning of the poem. Then ask students to reread stanza 5 aloud in pairs and discuss the following questions.

**What action occurs in lines 17–19?**

- Student responses should indicate an understanding that after the “Plank in Reason” (17) breaks the speaker falls, dropping and plunging down.

**What do the breaking of the “Plank in Reason” (17) and the plunge suggest about the speaker?**

- Student responses should indicate an understanding that this break in the speaker’s “Reason”(17) or thinking indicates that he/she’s gone crazy or left behind the ability to think or feel normally; he/she is out of control, falling.
- ① The word “dropped” and the repetition of “down” should help students to understand that to “plunge” (19) means to fall.

**What might the speaker be “Finished knowing” in the last line of the poem?**

- The speaker might be finished knowing reality or logical, sensible thoughts. He/She might also be finished knowing sounds or silence.

Lead a brief full class discussion of student responses.

## Activity 6: Gallery Walk

20%

Group students into three heterogeneous work groups. Display and distribute the directions for the Gallery Walk and review them with students: Each group will travel to a chart paper/poster and answer the question written there. The groups will then rotate clockwise, so each group sees each poster. When your group travels to the next poster, you should write something that either

- builds upon something someone else has written,
- provides evidence for something someone else has written, or
- contradicts and provides counter-evidence for something someone else has written.

Keep your text with you and refer to it as you travel.

Assign each group a poster to start with and begin the activity. Instruct students to discuss the answer before recording it on the poster, using textual evidence to support their response. Continue rotations until groups return to their original poster.

① Consider providing students with self-stick notes so that they are able to place responses in proximity to original comments. Instruct students to write fewer than 10 words and to write extremely neatly on self-stick notes to ensure legibility by their peers. If students do not use self-stick notes, instruct them to write large enough to make their comments legible, but also to leave space for additional comments.

- ▶ Students participate in the Gallery Walk activity, answering questions and contributing to answers written by other groups.

### Questions for Gallery Walk posters:

- Poster 1: What happens to the speaker over the course of the poem?
- Poster 2: What ideas do you notice repeating throughout the poem?
- Poster 3: What is the purpose of the funeral metaphor?

After students have completed the cycle, lead a brief full class discussion, asking students to offer examples of observations they made and comments and additions they made to other groups' observations.

💬 Student responses for each poster may include:

- Poster 1: The speaker begins by feeling a funeral in his/her brain, but then his/her brain begins to go numb (8). He/She is buried in the "Box" and he/she hears the bell of the heavens and space. He/She feels alone and broken, and he/she begins to lose his/her mind. He/She falls into madness and then stops understanding reality. He/She stops knowing.
- Poster 2: Repeating ideas may include sound ("beating," "creak," "toll"), solitude and silence ("numb," "silence," "solitary"), feeling ("felt," "numb," "wrecked"), sense or reason ("Sense," "Reason," "finished knowing"), and madness ("felt a funeral," "my mind was going



numb,” “wrecked,” “a Plank in Reason, broke,” “I dropped down, and down –,” “and Finished knowing – then –”).

- Poster 3: Student responses should indicate the understanding that the “Funeral” is a metaphor that represents the speaker’s break from “sense” (4) and “reason” (17), the end of “knowing” (20), and the descent into madness. The speaker uses the “Funeral” metaphor to describe the death of his/her mind. The different parts of the funeral represent how he/she feels as he/she gradually loses his/her mind. In stanza 1, he/she begins to feel the funeral. In stanza 2, the music/drumbeat of the funeral represents his/her mind going numb. In stanzas 3 and 4, as he/she is buried, the speaker hears the bells of heaven and then silence when he/she is completely alone in the “Box” or coffin. As he/she drops down in the coffin, the speaker finally goes mad.

## Activity 7: Quick Write

15%

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

**Determine a central idea in “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain.” How does this idea emerge and develop stanza by stanza over the course of the poem?**

Remind students to use the Short Response Checklist and Rubric to guide their written responses.

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

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

## Activity 8: Closing

5%

Tell students to recall their work with standard RL.9-10.5 in the beginning of the unit, with “The Tell-Tale Heart.” Remind students that some structural choices include ordering of events, repetition, punctuation, and especially in Dickinson’s case, capitalization.

Instruct students that for homework they will annotate their copy of “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,” noting Dickinson’s structural choices, using the code SC, just as they did for “The Tell-Tale Heart.”

Additionally, instruct students to continue to read their Accountable Independent Reading through the lens of their focus standard and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

## Homework

Annotate the poem for evidence of Dickinson’s structural choices. Remember to use the code SC (Structural Choice).

Continue reading your Accountable Independent Reading text through the lens of the assigned focus standard (RL.9-10.5) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.