

10.1.2

Unit Overview

“For one does not alter history without conviction.”

Texts	Unit 2: “The Palace Thief” by Ethan Canin
Number of Lessons in Unit	13

Introduction

In this unit, students revisit and further develop many of the foundational skills, practices, and routines that they explored in 10.1.1: close reading, annotating text, vocabulary acquisition, and evidence-based discussion and writing. Students continue to consider how authors develop central ideas, this time through fiction rather than poetry, as they read and analyze Ethan Canin’s “The Palace Thief.” Students’ skills and analysis culminate in a written response that formally evaluates the relationship between complex characters and central ideas.

Students’ work with this text focuses on how the interactions among, and development of, complex characters work to develop some of the central ideas in this text, such as the nature of character, the influence of history, and the manifestations of power. Students explore the battle of education and morals against politics, power, and wealth. They also negotiate rich and colorful language to better understand the narrator as he interacts with those around him.

For the Mid-Unit Assessment, students compose a written response, with appropriate supporting evidence, as they consider the narrator’s development over the course of the text (RL.9-10.3, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.9). Students are formally assessed here on their analysis of the text and their ability to marshal evidence in support of that analysis.

At the end of the unit, students craft a multi-paragraph response analyzing the development of a central idea in “The Palace Thief,” including how the narrator’s interactions with other characters helps contribute to this central idea (RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, W.9-10.2, L.9-10.1).

Note: This unit continues Accountable Independent Reading (AIR). See Prefatory Material for Grades 9–12 English Language Arts for more information about AIR.

Literacy Skills & Habits

- Read closely for textual details
- Annotate texts to support comprehension and analysis
- Engage in productive evidence-based discussions about the text
- Collect and organize evidence from the text to support analysis in writing
- Make claims about the text using specific textual evidence
- Incorporate newly learned vocabulary in written and verbal responses
- Express and analyze evolving impressions of the text as it advances

Standards for This Unit

CCS Standards: Reading – Literature	
RL.9-10.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
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: Writing	
W.9-10.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
W.9-10.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CCS Standards: Speaking & Listening	
SL.9-10.1	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</i>

	<i>issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</i>
SL.9-10.4	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
CCS Standards: Language	
L.9-10.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L.9-10.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Note: Bold text indicates the targeted standards assessed in this unit.

Unit Assessments

Ongoing Assessment	
Standards Assessed	RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.4, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.9, L.9-10.5
Description of Assessment	Varies by lesson but may include discussion of questions and development of written responses to prompts that ask students to analyze the evolution of characters and central ideas in the text.

End-of-Unit Assessment	
Standards Assessed	RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3
Description of Assessment	Students use the skills and habits they have been building throughout the unit to craft a multi-paragraph response to the End-of-Unit Assessment prompt: What central idea is developed in "The Palace Thief"? Students should consider how the narrator and his interaction with other characters help develop the central idea. Students should cite evidence and incorporate vocabulary words from the text to support their responses.

Unit-at-a-Glance Calendar

Lesson	Text	Learning Outcomes/Goals
1	“I tell this story not for my own honor” to “and therefore I called him into my office” (pp. 155–160).	Students are introduced to two of the narrator’s relationships in “The Palace Thief” involving his school and a problematic student. Because this is the first lesson of the unit, students revisit annotation techniques discussed in 10.1.1.
2	“In those days I lived in small quarters” to “My heart warmed somewhat toward young Sedgewick” (pp. 160–164).	Students further explore the character of the narrator as he meets with a student’s father, a powerful politician. Students cite textual evidence as they analyze character development in the text through discussion and written responses.
3	“Back at St. Benedict’s, furthermore, I saw that my words” to “and it was at that moment I realized he was cheating” (pp. 164–168).	Students engage in evidence-based discussion and collaborate to investigate the weight of the decisions that the narrator makes during the Mr. Julius Caesar competition. Students investigate how these decisions contribute to the development of a central idea.
4	“I had come to the job straight from my degree at Carleton College” to “I could see the sheets of my ‘Outline’ pressed against the inside of his garment” (pp. 168–171).	Students explore the conflict that the narrator feels as he struggles to understand the competition, as well as how to move forward in its aftermath. Students also work in groups to analyze character motivations, using evidence from the text to support their discussion.
5	“‘Well young man,’ I said, knocking on the door frame” to “and	Students focus on the figurative language and word choice in this excerpt as they discuss questions. Students analyze the impact of word choice on the meaning and tone of the text, as well as what

Lesson	Text	Learning Outcomes/Goals
	trundled off to sit among his friends” (pp. 171–175).	these choices reveal about the narrator.
6	“It came as a surprise, then, when I learned in the Richmond Gazette” to “and by the end of that month he had asked me to retire” (pp. 175–182).	Students discuss the narrator’s moral code and analyze how challenges and word choice contribute to a better understanding of the narrator and help advance the plot. Students also organize their materials as they prepare for the Mid-Unit Assessment.
7	Mid-Unit Assessment (“The Palace Thief,” pp. 168–182)	Students demonstrate their understanding of the text thus far as they analyze how the narrator has developed over the course of the text, citing supporting evidence in their response.
8	“And so I was preparing to end my days” to “Should I have spoken up to the Senator” (pp. 182–187).	Students analyze the impact of the narrator’s reflection, regret, and self-doubt on the decisions he makes for his future, as well as how these thoughts and feelings help shape a central idea of the text.
9	“In early July, however,” to “the first rounds of questions were called from memory” (pp. 187–191).	Students engage in an evidence-based discussion to analyze the narrator’s reflections and interactions with former students. Students explore the role that the narrator has had in his students’ lives, as well as how the impact he has hoped to have helps further develop a central idea of the text.
10	“The crowd did not fail to notice” to “to congratulate the victor” (pp. 191–195).	Students explore the impact that the narrator’s retirement has on the evolution of his character. Students participate in an evidence-based discussion and cite specific textual details to support character analysis. They also explore the narrator’s character development through his actions and assumptions.

Lesson	Text	Learning Outcomes/Goals
11	“How can I describe the scene” to ““You have not changed either,’ he said” (pp. 195–198).	Students analyze how the narrator’s expectations about the “Mr. Julius Caesar” reunion competition clash with the reality of the events. Students also analyze details in the text that shape a central idea.
12	“Well had I? As the craft lifted” to “of my boys, was now an old man” (pp. 198–205).	Students analyze how the narrator’s interaction with a former student helps develop a better understanding of his interaction with Sedgewick Bell. Students also discuss Bell’s Populist campaign and the narrator’s involvement.
13	End-of-Unit Assessment (full text of “The Palace Thief”).	Using work from 10.1.2 Lesson 12 and materials from previous lessons, students compose a multi-paragraph essay to demonstrate their understanding of the text’s central ideas through the End-of-Unit Assessment.

Preparation, Materials, and Resources

Preparation

- Read and annotate “The Palace Thief” by Ethan Canin.
- Review the Text Analysis Rubric and Checklist.
- Review all unit standards and post in classroom.
- Consider creating a word wall of the vocabulary provided in all lessons.

Materials/Resources

- Copies of the text “The Palace Thief”
- 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 10.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool
- Copies of the Text Analysis Rubric and Checklist
- Copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist