

## 10.1.2

## Lesson 3

## Introduction

In this lesson, students read and discuss the next section of “The Palace Thief,” from “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 explore how Hundert’s actions surrounding the “Mr. Julius Caesar” competition help contribute to the development of a central idea.

Students discuss their homework and listen to a masterful reading. This reading familiarizes students with the lesson’s text excerpt and allows them to build off of their homework analysis as a foundation for the discussion of an emerging central idea. Students engage in evidence-based discussions, during which they collaborate to investigate the weight of the decisions that Hundert makes before and during the competition, as well as how these choices further develop a central idea. Students complete a brief written response to assess their analysis of the relationship between Hundert’s actions and a central idea. For homework, students reread the section of the text and respond to the following reflective writing prompt: Describe the impact that Sedgewick’s cheating has on himself and on Hundert.

## 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.
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.
Addressed Standard(s)	
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.9-10.4	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).

## Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>The learning in this lesson is captured through a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students answer the following prompt based on the reading (citing evidence from the text and analyzing key words and phrases) completed in the lesson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do the narrator's actions in this passage reveal an emerging central idea of this text?</li> </ul>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the improvement that Sedgewick appears to be making in class—and later, in the contest—as well as the impact his academic performance has on Hundert.</li> <li>Identify the moment when Hundert breaks his own “cardinal rule” of teaching, as well as the consequences of this decision, and connect these details to the development of a central idea of the text (for example, compromising one's morals can lead to a loss of control).</li> </ul>

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>nascent (adj.) – beginning to exist or develop</li> <li>formidable (adj.) – causing fear, apprehension, or dread</li> <li>umbra (n.) – shade; shadow</li> </ul>
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>cardinal (adj.) – of prime importance</li> </ul>

## 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.9-10.3, RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.4</li> <li>Text: “The Palace Thief,” by Ethan Canin (pp. 164–168)</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>Homework Accountability</li> <li>Masterful Reading</li> <li>Pages 164–168 Reading and Discussion</li> <li>Quick Write</li> <li>Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5%</li> <li>20%</li> <li>10%</li> <li>45%</li> <li>15%</li> <li>5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

- Copies of the Analyzing Details Tool for each student
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 10.1.1 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.
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 sharing the assessed standards for this lesson: RL.9-10.2 and RL.9-10.3. In this lesson, students continue to read “The Palace Thief,” pp. 164–168 (from “Back at St. Benedict’s, furthermore, I saw that my words” to “and it was at that moment I realized he was cheating”) and analyze decisions that Hundert makes before and during the competition, as well as how these choices further develop a central idea.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

## Activity 2: Homework Accountability

20%

Instruct students to take out their homework from the previous lesson. Ask students to form pairs to discuss their Analyzing Detail Tools for either the conversation with Sedgewick or the Senator. Direct students to discuss the different details they selected and share connections. Instruct students to amend their tools, if necessary, based on discussion.

- ▶ Students pair up with a classmate who focused on the same conversation (either between the narrator and Sedgewick or the narrator and the Senator) to share details, discuss analysis, and establish connections. Students amend their tools as necessary based on peer feedback and discussion.
- 🗨 See the Model Analyzing Details Tools at the end of the lesson for sample student responses.

Bring students back to attention and facilitate a discussion around the following question:

**What do these interactions reveal about the narrator’s character?**

- 🗨 Student responses may include the following:
  - The narrator attempts to give the impression of authority—successfully in the case of Sedgewick (as he threatens to talk to the Senator), and unsuccessfully in the case of the Senator, who insults Hundert and his profession, telling him to “merely” teach Sedgewick (p. 164).
  - In both conversations, Sedgewick and the Senator try to take the focus away from the issue the narrator wants to discuss, Sedgewick’s behavior, but only the Senator succeeds by insulting and dismissing Hundert. He informs the teacher that his job is not to “mold” the boy’s character but “merely teach him” (p. 164).

- There is a larger conflict and threat to the narrator's worldview; the Senator is unimpressed with his discussion of content and disagrees with his belief that he is responsible for "molding" the character of his students (p. 164).
- Hundert seems unable to do anything to respond to this threat to his worldview.
- Following his conversation with the Senator, the narrator sympathizes with Sedgewick, formerly only a source of conflict for him. He reflects that his "heart warmed somewhat toward young Sedgewick" (p. 164).

**What are some examples of central ideas that have developed in the text based on the text analysis so far?**

💬 Student responses may suggest the ideas of control and power within the text. This should focus them for the next discussion question.

① Remind students that they were taught the concept of central idea in the previous unit. Consider reminding students of the emerging central ideas that revolve around the relationship between status and influence.

**How do Hundert and Senator Bell's roles help reveal an emerging central idea in the text?**

💬 Student responses may include:

- Hundert and the Senator have different views of education and upbringing, and at the end of the day, the Senator trumps Hundert in power. Hundert wants to believe that he has more control or influence over Sedgewick, but it does not really happen until he threatens Sedgewick with contacting his father (p. 161).
- There is an element of control in both conversations, and in both instances, Hundert is without it. Hundert is only able to alter Sedgewick's behavior by threatening to talk to the Senator (p. 164). In the Senator's office, Hundert is belittled and swiftly pushed out of the office before he has time to think (p. 164).

### Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of a passage from "The Palace Thief" from "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).

Provide definitions for the following words as they appear during the masterful reading: *nascent*, *formidable*, and *umbra*. Instruct students to read along in their texts.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

- ① Consider displaying the vocabulary words and the definitions for students to see throughout the lesson.

Ask students to independently annotate their text with their initial reactions and questions.

🗨 Student annotations may include:

- \* The paragraph that begins “Such, of course, are the honeyed morsels” (p. 164), noting the interest Hundert takes in Sedgewick Bell, as well as the reasons for this renewed interest.
- \* The paragraph that begins “By the end of the narrowing quizzes, however, a surprising configuration had emerged” (p. 165) highlights a major compromise that Hundert makes in order to orchestrate more success or confidence for Sedgewick.
- \* The paragraph that begins “Sedgewick Bell’s eyes showed no recognition” (p. 166), noting Sedgewick’s apparent struggle, as well as Hundert’s reaction.
- \* The section of text from “I was delighted. Not only was he proving” to “the next Annual Fund drive, was smiling broadly” (p. 167) highlights some of the personal reasons, or motivations Hundert has in rooting for Sedgewick’s success.
- ! The final sentence of the text, from “Sedgewick Bell cast his eyes downward” (p. 168); he is finally humbled a bit.

#### Activity 4: Pages 164–168 Reading and Discussion

**45%**

Introduce the Quick Write assessment prompt (How do the narrator’s actions in this passage reveal an emerging central idea of this text?). Explain to students that this is the lesson assessment and the focus for today’s reading.

- ▶ Students examine the Quick Write assessment prompt and listen.

- ① Display the Quick Write assessment prompt for students to see.

Instruct students to form their pre-established heterogeneous small groups from previous lessons. Ask students to read their text from “Back at St. Benedict’s, furthermore, I saw that my words” to “one cannot overstate the importance of a public joust” (pp. 164–165). Instruct groups to discuss the following questions.

- ▶ Students discuss the questions in their small groups.

- ① Circulate while students are discussing to ensure students are using evidence from the text to support their analysis.

After each small group discussion, bring students together as a whole class and lead a discussion of their analysis.

**How does the narrator describe the importance of the contest? What is the impact of the description?**

- By describing it as a “mythic ritual” or a revered “public joust,” Hundert compares the contemporary competition to a historical contest, but highlights that it is still popular among students today (p. 165).

**What does the lead up to the contest reveal about the narrator and his thoughts about Sedgewick?**

- Student responses may include:
  - It reveals that Hundert’s attitude toward Sedgewick has changed. The narrator states directly that he “might have taken a special interest that term in Sedgewick Bell” (p. 164), giving him easier questions than his classmates after the conversation with the Senator.
  - Hundert feels some validation because Sedgewick’s academic performance improves after the conversations—the narrator explains that he “saw that [his] words had evidently had some effect on the boy” (p. 164).

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Instruct student groups to read from “That year I had three obvious contenders” to “and it was at that moment I realized he was cheating” (pp. 165–168). Then, ask groups to discuss the following questions.

**What possible explanations does the narrator provide for making his “first mistake” (p. 165)?**

- The narrator’s “first mistake” is that he cheats on Sedgewick’s behalf, giving him “an A on a quiz on which he had earned only a B” (p. 165). This allows Sedgewick to be a contestant in the “Mr. Julius Caesar” competition.
- ① This is an important understanding at this point in the text, as it establishes the basis for the central ideas of the inescapability of history and of character. Consider extending the discussion on this “mistake” if time permits.

**What is “the cardinal rule” in the context of this paragraph (p. 165)?**

- Because of the importance the narrator attaches to the breaking of the rule, “the cardinal rule” refers to the most important rule.

**What complex emotions does the narrator experience because of Sedgewick’s apparent success in the contest? What function do these feelings serve?**

- Student responses may include:

- His feelings reveal that the contest is now not just about the academic lives of the boys but about the ethical life of the narrator as well, since Hundert is also "delighted" that Sedgewick is proving his "gamble worthwhile" (p. 167).
- The narrator is conflicted about his decision and knows that he is violating his own understanding of right and wrong when he continues to favor Sedgewick by giving him easier questions. The "gamble" points to Hundert's decision to cheat, to give Sedgewick a better grade (p. 167).

**How has the contest and Hundert's control of the situation become more complicated since initially breaking a "cardinal rule of teaching" (p. 165)?**

💬 Student responses may include:

- Now Hundert knows that his gamble may not have been "worthwhile" after all.
- Instead of Hundert breaking one rule, born at least partially out of good intentions, he has created an opportunity for Sedgewick to break a rule as well.
- Initially Hundert was the only guilty party. Now he is accountable for anything that happens afterward in the competition.
- Hundert has to think about how he will handle himself, the contest, and Sedgewick.

### Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

**How do the narrator's actions in this passage reveal an emerging central idea of this text?**

Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist 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.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Elicit some of the vocabulary words from the first three lessons that might be appropriate for students to use in their Quick Writes, and encourage students to incorporate 1–3 words in their work. Examples of vocabulary words for consideration are: *boorishness, indolence, puerile, scruples, affront, novice, and cardinal*.

## Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread the section of the text of today's lesson and respond to the following reflective writing prompt:

**Describe the impact that Sedgewick's cheating has on himself and on Hundert.**

Remind students to use thorough textual evidence in their responses.

► Students follow along.

① Encourage students to integrate newly learned vocabulary words into their reflective writing homework.

## Homework

Reread the section of the text of today's lesson and respond in a well-developed paragraph to the following reflective writing prompt:

**Describe the impact that Sedgewick's cheating has on himself and on Hundert.**

Use thorough textual evidence and any applicable vocabulary in your response.

## Model Analyzing Details Tool

## Hundert/Sedgewick

Date:		Class:		Date:	
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Character Detail: Select specific words or phrases that are the most important in understanding motivations of the characters.	Analysis: How/why are these details important? What do they reveal about an emerging central idea?
<p><b>Hundert's motivations:</b> "I was well aware of the import of what I taught at St. Benedict's." (p. 156)</p> <p>"My classroom was in fact a tribute to the lofty ideals of man ... which I hoped would temper their ambition with humility." (pp. 156–157)</p> <p>"this is a serious class, and I expect that you will take it seriously" (p. 158)</p> <p>"Whenever one of those antics occurred, ... to answer a question." (p. 159)</p> <p>"What would you like me to tell the Senator?" (p. 161)</p> <p>"My heart warmed somewhat toward young Sedgewick." (p. 165)</p>	<p>Hundert thinks he is (and should be) an important influence in his students' lives. History is important to Hundert, and he thinks it should be important to everyone (it should inspire them and make them humble).</p> <p>He hopes that by simply telling Sedgewick that the class is serious, Sedgewick will listen. He thinks Sedgewick will appreciate his class and his teaching.</p> <p>He wants to discover how to improve Sedgewick's behavior. He feels guilty about making Sedgewick feel stupid, so he threatens to get in touch with his father without recognizing any danger in this approach.</p> <p>The father is worse than the son, and this is when Hundert decides to take Sedgewick under his wing. It's unclear if Sedgewick is willing or unwilling, or if it's Hundert's influence or the Senator's that has an effect.</p>

Character Detail: Select specific words or phrases that are the most important in understanding motivations of the characters.	Analysis: How/why are these details important? What do they reveal about an emerging central idea?
<p><b>Sedgewick’s motivations:</b> “Your mother must be wearing your pants today.” (p. 158)</p> <p>“If it’s such a serious class, ... he responded again to laughter” (p. 158)</p> <p>“as soon as he arrived he began a stream of capers using spitballs, wads of gum, and thumbtacks” (p. 159)</p> <p>“but Sedgewick Bell then began to add the dangerous element of natural leadership” (p. 159)</p> <p>“That’s why you like putting us in togas, right?” (p. 160)</p>	<p>Establish himself to his classmates as fearless; to make an impression, and not a serious or academic impression.</p> <p>He wants to be the center of attention.</p> <p>Sedgewick realizes he doesn’t have to be smart or well-behaved to earn the respect of others.</p>
<p><b>Connect Details/Explain the connections between Hundert and Sedgewick:</b></p> <p>Hundert spends his life and his career trying to help students understand the power and importance of history in order to be successful. Sedgewick is not interested in history or academics and is immediately popular. He learns at a young age that he doesn’t need to be smart or well-behaved to earn the respect from others. He also likes the attention he receives, because he keeps engaging in attention-seeking behavior.</p>	

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## Model Analyzing Details Tool

## Hundert/The Senator

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Class:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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Character Detail: Select specific words or phrases that are the most important in understanding motivations of the characters.	Analysis: How/why are these details important? What do they reveal about an emerging central idea?
<p><b>Hundert's motivations:</b> "I admit that the prospect of seeing the man in his own office intrigued me." (p. 161)</p> <p>"I was frightened but determined" (p. 162)</p> <p>"The office was as grand as a duke's." (p. 162)</p> <p>"I reminded myself that Sedgewick Hiram Bell was a senator but also a father" (p. 162)</p> <p>"It's my job, sir, to mold your son's character." (p. 163)</p>	<p>He feels nervous and intimidated about meeting the Senator but is tempted by the opportunity to make his case to such an important figure.</p> <p>He thinks that even though the Senator lives a privileged life, they have something in common; Hundert thinks the Senator will care about his son's performance and will want him to improve.</p> <p>He tries to communicate how important his role is in Sedgewick's life.</p>

Character Detail: Select specific words or phrases that are the most important in understanding motivations of the characters.	Analysis: How/why are these details important? What do they reveal about an emerging central idea?
<p><b>The Senator's motivations:</b> "What's the good of what you're teaching them boys?" (p. 163)</p> <p>"He put me in a leather seat, offered me a cigar, which I refused, and then with real or contrived wonder—perhaps he did something like this with all of his visitors—he proceeded to show me an antique sidearm" (p. 162)</p> <p>"Now, that's a horse who can talk" (p. 163)</p> <p>"I'm sorry, young man...but you will not mold him. I will mold him. You will merely teach him." (pp. 163–164)</p>	<p>The Senator, rather than showing concern for his son, instead questions Hundert's entire profession and passion. He dismisses Hundert's concerns and makes the meeting seem more like an opportunity for Hundert to defend the integrity of his position.</p> <p>He is not impressed by Hundert's passionate speech in response to the question. He doesn't listen to what Hundert says, and he has no problem communicating that. He easily insults the man who teaches his son and dismisses his role and his importance. He displays his power over Hundert by using the word "merely" (p. 164).</p> <p>Although he is a Senator and a father, he is more powerful than Hundert, so Hundert's words and passion don't matter (and aren't nearly as important to get ahead as Hundert would like to believe).</p>
<p><b>Connect Details/Explain the connections between Hundert and the Senator:</b></p> <p>They both think they are important for different reasons. Hundert is excited about the opportunity to explain his cause, his mission, and his passion to the Senator. He hopes the Senator will be as interested in Sedgewick's academic performance as he is. He is let down and is also insulted. Not only does the Senator not seem to care about Sedgewick's performance in school, he also questions Hundert's relevance as a teacher. The Senator is proof that you can be successful without being passionate or concerned about academic performance and ancient history.</p>	

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