

10.1.2**Lesson 8****Introduction**

In this lesson, students read and discuss the next section of “The Palace Thief,” from “And so I was preparing to end my days” to “Should I have spoken up to the Senator?” (pp. 182–187) in which Hundert agrees to facilitate a rematch of the “Mr. Julius Caesar” competition and participates in his last school graduation.

Students collaborate and discuss Hundert’s present, as well as the nagging memory of his past, analyzing the impact that Hundert’s retrospective self-doubt has on shaping central ideas in the text. Discussion and analysis revolve around two ideas in the text: the final days at St. Benedict and Hundert’s reflections on the past and his nervousness about the future. This analysis culminates in a Quick Write in which students are asked to provide specific textual details to support their analysis of Hundert’s reflections.

For homework, students continue to read their AIR through the lens of their newest focus standard (RI/RL.9-10.3).

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)	
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.9-10.3	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.

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"> How do Hundert's reflections develop a central idea of the text?
High Performance Response(s)
<p>High Performance Responses should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on significant events that occur in Hundert's life that give him the opportunity to rewrite the past, as well as analyze why he does or does not change his actions. Use details of Hundert's development to make a broader statement about him as a flawed character and how this contributes to the development of a central idea of the text.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maturation (n.) – the act or process of becoming fully developed in body or mind, as a person guileless (adj.) – sincere; honest; straightforward; frank slight (n.) – insult or rejection meretriciousness (n.) – quality of being falsely praiseful or superficial tenure (n.) – the period or term of holding something
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/ or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rancor (n.) – bitter, rankling resentment or ill will; hatred; malice <p>i This is an extremely rich text for vocabulary, and there are opportunities for vocabulary instruction in this section of the text. Teachers should feel free to include additional vocabulary instruction as student need requires or time permits.</p>

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.3 Text: “The Palace Thief,” by Ethan Canin (pp. 182–187) 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Masterful Reading Text Analysis and Full-Class Discussion Quick Write Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 10% 10% 55% 15% 5%

Materials

- 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.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<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 to Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and sharing the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.9-10.2. In this lesson, students will explore the changes in Hundert through his retirement by discussing a series of questions that support close reading of several sections of text. Students analyze the impact that

Hundert's reflections about the past, the present, and the future have on developing central ideas in the text.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they can apply their focus standard (RI/RL.9-10.3) to their AIR 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 how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text from the previous lesson's homework.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Introduce the Quick Write assessment prompt (How do Hundert's reflections develop a central idea of the text?). Explain to students that this is the lesson assessment and the focus for today's reading.

- ▶ Students read the assessment prompt and listen.

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

Have students listen to a masterful reading of a passage from "The Palace Thief," from "And so I was preparing to end my days" to "Should I have spoken up to the Senator?" (pp. 182–187). Provide definitions for the following words as they appear during the masterful reading: *maturation*, *meretriciousness*, *slight*, and *tenure*.

Instruct students to read along in their texts.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

① Consider displaying the vocabulary and definitions for students to access throughout the lesson. The vocabulary to provide is in the vocabulary box at the beginning of the lesson.

Activity 4: Text Analysis and Full-Class Discussion

55%

Instruct students to read in groups from "And so I was preparing to end my days" to "That evening I began to prepare my test" (pp. 182–183), and annotate according to the established annotation codes.

- ▶ Students read and annotate the text.

🗨 Student annotations may include the following:

- ! Sedgewick tells Hundert that he had “often dreamed of holding a rematch of ‘Mr. Julius Caesar’” (p. 182). This is interesting, because his current job is in steel, not in the humanities.
- * Hundert claims to not be surprised by Sedgewick, “for it is precisely this sort of childhood slight that will drive a great figure” (p. 183).
- ? Sedgewick would be giving the school and Hundert money. Is it a good idea to get money from a former student who did not leave the best impression?
- ? Hundert gives the impression that the competition is worth having from a financial perspective (both personally and for the school). Is this the real reason he considers holding the rematch?

Instruct students, in their groups, to respond to the following questions:

How can Hundert’s response to Sedgewick’s letter help you to determine the meaning of *rancor* (p. 182) in this context?

- 🗨 Students should point to Hundert’s “pleasure” that the letter “contained no trace of rancor” (p. 182) to indicate that “rancor” in this context means something bad, like bitterness or hatred, that would cause Hundert to feel displeasure.

To what does Hundert attribute Sedgewick’s lack of *rancor*? What might this suggest about how Hundert understands Sedgewick’s growth from disobedient student to successful businessman?

- 🗨 Hundert believes that Sedgewick has outgrown his childish behavior—his kind letter is a result of his “maturation.” This indicates that Hundert believes Sedgewick has grown and changed for the better since he was a student at St. Bendedict’s (p. 182).

① If necessary, remind students of the definition of *maturation* as “the act or process of becoming fully developed in body or mind, as a person.”

How does the presence of the word “artfully” in Hundert’s description of Sedgewick’s greeting as “artfully guileless” (p. 182) change your understanding of Hundert’s initial reactions to the letter? What might this suggest about how Sedgewick has grown?

- 🗨 The word “artfully” changes the meaning of Hundert’s description of Sedgewick’s greeting as “guileless” (p. 182). This description now indicates that Sedgewick is strategically or purposefully attempting to appear honest, sincere, or frank. Students should infer from this hint that

Sedgewick's new kind and respectful behavior is calculated and that perhaps Sedgewick has not changed as much as it first appears he has.

① If necessary, remind students of the definition of *guileless* as “sincere, honest, straightforward, or frank.”

What does Hundert mean when he notes that “it is precisely this sort of childhood slight that will drive a great figure” (p. 183)? What does Hundert think he knows about Sedgewick's character?

💬 Student responses may include the following:

- Hundert is not surprised that Sedgewick wants to compete again, because rejection/loss/regret, even in high school, can stay with people their entire lives.
- He overcame his “Mr. Julius Caesar” competition to become successful, but there's one void he wants to fill to “reclaim his intellectual honor” (p. 183).

Hundert remarks that he “[is] flattered” after discovering that Sedgewick “desired the chance to reclaim his intellectual honor” (p. 183). What does this indicate about Hundert's character? Where have we seen this idea before?

💬 Student responses may include the following:

- Hundert is touched to be such an important part of Sedgewick's memories of St. Benedict's; the “Mr. Julius Caesar” competition must have had a major impact on Sedgewick's life.
- This is familiar from Hundert's actions in the first “Mr. Julius Caesar” competition, when he feels a sense of responsibility towards Sedgewick, as well as the sense of pride in his attachment to any of Sedgewick's success in front of faculty and family (p. 167).

Lead a brief full-class discussion of student responses.

① Consider reviewing definitions of *rancor*, *guileless*, and *slight*.

Instruct students to read from “As assistant headmaster I had not taught my beloved Roman history” to “However, by evening my spirits had taken a beating” (pp. 183–186) and annotate the text. Tell the students that the names he mentions at the bottom of page 183 are notable real-life men.

① Consider reviewing the definition of *meritriciousness*.

▶ Students read and annotate the text.

💬 Student annotations may include the following:

- * Hundert's reflections on aging and retirement are kind of sad but expected for someone who seems to have lived his life for St. Benedict's.

- * Hundert “tried not to think about” (p. 184) the future, but the only thing we know that is happening is a rematch of a contest held in the past.
- * He describes the “eerie quiet of summer” (p. 185) as something familiar, but it also sounds like he knows that is what his retirement might be like, free from students and the buzz of a busy school.

Instruct students, in their groups, to refer to their annotations as they discuss the following questions:

In what way does Hundert’s “spirit take a beating” (p. 186) in this section?

🗨 Student responses may include the following:

- He has tried “not to think about [his] future” (p. 184), but in a short amount of time his life is going to undergo a major change, at sixty-eight years old.
- Hundert notes that he takes pleasure in preparing for the competition, a thankful distraction that would have made “those first few days and nights...unbearable” (p. 186) had he been without it.
- He skips the headmaster’s reception but regrets it; he feels the boys were “passing...into the world without [him]” (p. 185); he relates to the comparison to an escaped slave. He is feeling old.

Lead a brief full-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students, in their groups, to read from “Fortunately, there was the event to prepare for” to “Should I have spoken up to the Senator” (pp. 186–187) and annotate the text.

▶ Students read and annotate.

🗨 Student annotations may include the following:

- * Hundert realizes his life is going to be forever different now that he is retired; “the start of that summer should have been no different from the start of any other” (p. 186).
- * Hundert is struggling to recognize who he is, questioning, “Is that you?” and “What now” (p. 186)? These questions are new to him. The change of scenery is unfamiliar and makes him feel uncomfortable.
- ! The only thing Hundert seems to have to look forward to is the reunion competition, or more specifically, seeing Sedgewick. He even thinks of the dread and fear he feels at the prospect of Sedgewick forgetting about the event (p. 186).
- * Hundert also entertains the idea that Sedgewick might be mocking him, and it causes him to question decisions he made in the past.

Instruct students, in their groups, to refer to their annotations as they discuss the following question:

What feelings does the anticipation for the contest conjure in Hundert?

💬 Student responses may include the following:

- He feels a little lost in his identity: “Is that you?” (p. 186) and uncomfortable with his new situation: “What now?” (p. 186).
- The wait resurfaces conflicts about Sedgewick for Hundert. He fears Sedgewick may have “forgotten about the event” (p. 186) or even proposed the idea “just to mock [him]” (p. 187).
- Away from his school and with time on his hands, Hundert starts to question decisions he made more than 30 years ago, specifically decisions surrounding the “Mr. Julius Caesar” competition: “Should I never even have leapfrogged another boy to get him there? Should I have spoken up to the Senator?” (p. 187). He is nervous about the future and cannot stop thinking about the past.

Lead a brief, full-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

How do Hundert’s reflections develop a central idea of the text?

Direct students to look at their text and notes to find evidence. 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 students 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. Instruct students that for homework they will continue to read their AIR through the lens of their focus standard (RI/RL.9-10.3) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on the standards.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Continue AIR through the lens of the focus standard (RI/RL.9-10.3) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your AIR text based on that standard.