

10.1.2

Lesson 9

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze an excerpt of “The Palace Thief,” from “In early July, however, Sedgewick Bell’s secretary” to “the first rounds of questions were called from memory” (pp. 187–191). This passage depicts the events leading up to the second “Mr. Julius Caesar” competition.

Through a series of guided questions, students analyze how the interactions between Hundert and his former students continue to develop the central idea that Hundert is more comfortable thinking about the past than the future. Students focus their analysis on Hundert’s reflections on his role in his students’ lives, as well as his honest exchange with Martin Blythe. Analysis of these details transitions students to their Quick Write for this lesson, in which they are asked to describe how Hundert’s reunion with his former students contributes to the development of a central idea in the text.

For homework, students respond in writing to the following prompt: In light of the events following Hundert’s retirement, how have your impressions of him grown or changed?

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
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 a 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.9-10.2	Determine a theme or central idea of the 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.

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 does Hundert’s reunion with his former students contribute to the development of a central idea in the text?
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and develop a central idea around Hundert’s willingness to hang onto the past, contrasted by his stubbornness to learn from those experiences in making present or future decisions. Reference Hundert’s confession to Martin Blythe as an opportunity to begin anew and reconcile some of the wrong decisions that plague his past. Identify the impression that Hundert has of the adult versions of his former students and how this impression might inform his line of reasoning about Sedgewick Bell. Discuss the momentum that Hundert has going into the “Mr. Julius Caesar” reunion competition after spending quality time with his former students.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> disgorging (v.) – to surrender or yield something poignant (adj.) – affecting or moving the emotions imbued (v.) – impregnated or inspired, as with feelings, opinions, etc. largesse (n.) – generous bestowal of gifts serpentine (adj.) – having a winding course, as a road
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reprieve (n.) – any respite or temporary relief jocular (adj.) – intended for, or suited to, joking voluble (adj.) – characterized by a ready or continuous flow of words

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2 Text: “The Palace Thief,” by Ethan Canin (pp. 187–191) 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Masterful Reading Pages 187–191 Reading and 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 assessed standard for this lesson: RL.9-10.3. Through a series of guided questions, students analyze how the interactions between Hundert and his former students develop a central idea of the text.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

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

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Introduce the Quick Write assessment prompt (How does Hundert's reunion with his former students contribute to the development of a central idea in 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.

Ask students to listen to a masterful reading of the passage from "The Palace Thief," from "In early July, however, Sedgewick Bell's Secretary" to "the first rounds of questions were recalled from memory" (pp. 187–191). Provide definitions for the following words as they appear during the masterful reading: *disgorging*, *poignant*, *imbued*, *jocular*, *voluble*, and *largesse*.

- ▶ 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: Pages 187–191 Reading and Discussion

55%

Instruct students to form their pre-established groups from earlier in the unit and to reread and annotate the excerpt from "The Palace Thief," from "In early July, however, Sedgewick Bell's secretary" to "the first rounds of questions were recalled from memory" (pp. 187-191).

- 💬 Student annotation might include the following:

- → Hundert seems to be star-struck about taking the helicopter to the reunion competition. This is reminiscent of how he felt the first time he went to meet the Senator.
 - * Hundert's judgment also seems mixed. In the span of two paragraphs he wonders what "life might have been like if [he] had felt this just once in [his] youth" (p. 188) and then passes judgment on the "privileged romp on a private island" (p. 189).
 - * Hundert gets very emotional about seeing his former students and describes all of them as being grown up versions of their former selves. Who his students have become is no surprise to him.
 - → Hundert describes Sedgewick's walk among the men as one "like a prophet" (p. 190). This could be seen as an evolved version of how he strutted amongst his classmates in school.
 - → Twice Hundert has the opportunity to talk more in depth with his students about their lives (Deepak and Martin), yet he does not.
 - → Hundert wonders for a moment if the students spent time with him as a way to do better in the competition.
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Pose the following questions to students to discuss in their groups.

- ① Students should also refer to the definitions of their new vocabulary words, either annotated in their own text or provided as a handout or displayed.

What feeling does Hundert express in the first line of this section and why?

- 💬 Hundert expresses relief in the first line because he "finally" (p. 187) hears back from Sedgewick. He spent the last lines of the previous excerpt questioning what he had gotten himself into, and Sedgewick's phone call puts his mind at ease.

How does this inform your understanding of the meaning of the word *reprieve*?

- 💬 Reprieve, then, must refer to some kind of relief.

What kind of impact do the helicopter ride and accommodations have on Hundert?

- 💬 Student responses should include the following observations:
 - He seems a bit overwhelmed, noting that, "I felt a headiness that I had never known before" (p. 187).
 - He likens his journey to that of Caesar (p. 187).
 - It causes a moment of reflection, where Hundert compares himself to Sedgewick and wonders to himself "what [his] life would have been like if [he] had felt this just once in his

youth” (p. 187). While he can judge Sedgewick for his life of privilege, for a moment he covets it as well.

- He is judgmental, noting how difficult it is to get great men together for something meaningful, but “for a privileged romp on a private island, it had merely been a matter of making the arrangements” (p. 188). He seems to have this judgment about everyone else, but not about himself.

What does Hundert notice about the boys, now they are grown?

- In each of them, he notices signs of physical deterioration but also signs of “the eager expressiveness” (p. 188) they had shown 41 years ago.

Direct students’ attention to the paragraph that starts with “The most poignant part of all, however” (pp. 188–189). Instruct students to circle the word “still” each time Hundert uses it when describing his former students. Then pose the following question:

How does the repetition of the word “still” contribute to the development of a central idea of the text?

- Student responses should include the following:
 - He uses “still” three times, as well as “same” and “used to” when describing each of his three most memorable students (aside from Sedgewick). This indicates that, although they have grown, in many ways, they have not changed at all. In this way, Canin reinforces the central idea that people seldom really change their character.

Instruct students, in their groups, to reread the section from “But of course it was Sedgewick Bell who commanded” to “and the first rounds of questions were called from memory” (pp. 189–191).

- ▶ Students reread the text in small groups and discuss the questions, while referring to their annotation.

What words and phrases in Hundert’s description of Bell can help you to determine the meaning of *jocular* (p. 189) in this context?

- ▶ Students should point to Hundert’s initial statement that Bell’s walk was not “serious” to infer that when Hundert describes Bell’s walk as “jocular” (p. 189) he means that his walk is the opposite of serious, i.e. joking.

How can your understanding of *jocular* help you to make meaning of Hundert’s description of Bell’s laugh as *voluble* (p. 189)? What is the cumulative effect of these descriptions?

- ▶ Students should draw upon their understanding that Bell appears to be jovial and joking to infer that “voluble” in this context means that Bell is laughing a lot or continuously. The cumulative effect of these descriptions is to paint an appealing portrait of Bell: He appears light-hearted, fun to be around, and good with people.

How does Hundert’s reaction to his exchange with Blythe refine your understanding of Hundert’s character?

- 💬 Student observations may include the following details:
 - It is puzzling that Hundert does not have more of a response, either internally through narration or externally to Blythe, as this is tied to the cardinal rule that Hundert broke. We learn that the chain of events that followed his decision to include Sedgewick and not Blythe have tormented Hundert for decades.
 - When Hundert claims to save Blythe “from some torment” (p. 191) right after describing Blythe’s very real torment during the war, it seems like a stretch in terms of the amount of importance given to both events (being passed over for a contest vs. losing a leg in battle).
 - Hundert feels like he has relieved Martin Blythe with his admission, but he himself does not necessarily seem relieved, even though he has been tormented by whether or not he should have leapfrogged Sedgewick. His repent is only partial, enough for Martin Blythe to be satisfied with the truth, but Hundert does not reveal why.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

Determine a central idea from Hundert’s reunion with his former students. How does this idea emerge and develop over the course of the 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 Instruct students to use vocabulary words from this lesson in their Quick Write.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

In light of the events in Hundert's retirement, how have your impressions of him grown or changed? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Respond briefly to the following prompt:

In light of the events in Hundert's retirement, how have your impressions of him grown or changed? Use evidence from the text to support your response.