

**10.1.3****Lesson 12****Introduction**

In this lesson, students will read “Dreaming of Heroes,” from “There were some kids who came out of Odessa” through “At least for as long as the season lasted” (pp. 79–84), in which H. G. Bissinger develops the father/son narrative of Don and Charlie Billingsley, a parallel relationship to that of Mike and Billy Winchell. Students explore the social factors at work beneath the surface of Permian football, and how memory and time function within this community as revealed by key details in Bissinger’s descriptions of Don and Charlie. The exploration of this nuanced father/son relationship in the lesson will prepare students to make more complex inferences in Lesson 13, as they expand the scope of their analysis to consider the relationship between the town of Odessa and the Permian Panthers.

In this lesson, students participate in discussions in small groups and with the whole class, as well as complete a detailed analysis activity. An independent writing assignment that asks students to consider how Bissinger unfolds a series of ideas assesses student learning. This lesson provides opportunity for students to have constructive, respectful, and academically focused conversations around issues of class and race; topics that are central to Bissinger’s larger ideas in the text.

For homework, students reread the portion of the chapter they have read thus far and identify at least one central idea of the text. Additionally, students continue to read their Accountable Independent Reading texts.

**Standards**

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.9-10.3	Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
L.9-10.2.a	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing. a. Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.

Addressed Standard(s)	
RI.9-10.2	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze 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 text evidence and analyzing key words and phrases) completed in the lesson.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What connection does Bissinger develop between Don and Charlie Billingsley's relationship and Permian football? Use key details from the text to support your response.</li> </ul> <p>① Remind students that they will be assessed on their use of a semicolon in this response.</p>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make an observation about the relationship between Don and his father, and how Bissinger connects this relationship to Permian football.</li> <li>Support this analysis with specific details from the text.</li> <li>Use a semicolon to link two closely related independent clauses.</li> </ul>

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>David and Goliath: a Bible story about a child who defeats a giant in battle</li> <li>townies (n.) – residents of a town, especially non-student residents of a college town</li> <li>parable (n.) – a short allegorical story designed to illustrate or teach some truth, religious principle, or moral lesson</li> <li>lineman (n.) – in American football, one of the players in the line, as a center, guard, tackle, or end</li> <li>hair trigger (n.) – a trigger that allows the firing mechanism of a firearm to be operated by very slight pressure</li> </ul>

- regaled (v.) – entertained lavishly or agreeably; delighted
- exploits (n.) – striking or notable deeds; feat; spirited or heroic act
- macho (adj.) – having or characterized by qualities considered manly, especially when manifested in an assertive, self-conscious, or dominating way
- tacit (adj.) – understood without being openly expressed, implied
- insouciant (adj.) – free from concern, worry, or anxiety; carefree; nonchalant
- tailback (n.) – in American football, the offensive player who lines up farthest behind the line of scrimmage

#### Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- ornery (adj.) – ugly or unpleasant in disposition or temper; stubborn

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards: RI.9-10.3, L.9-10.2a, RI.9-10.2</li> <li>• Text: <i>Friday Night Lights</i> “Dreaming of Heroes” (pp. 79–84).</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b>	
1. Introduction Lesson Agenda	1. 15%
2. Homework Accountability	2. 10%
3. Pages 79–84 Reading and Discussion	3. 60%
4. Quick Write	4. 10%
5. Closing	5. 5%

## Materials

- Student copies of the 10.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool (refer to 10.1.1 Lesson 1)
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric (refer to 10.1.1 Lesson 1)

## Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
<b>10%</b>	<b>Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.</b>
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 to Lesson Agenda

15%

Begin by introducing the agenda and assessed standards for this lesson: RI.9-10.3 and L.9-10.2.a. In this lesson, students consider the father/son narrative of Don and Charlie Billingsley through an exploration of their relationship to one another, to Permian football, and to the town of Odessa.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Explain to students that this excerpt contains sensitive material, and that they will engage with these controversial passages and the assumptions, prejudices, and conflicts they reveal, in a productive, critical, and thoughtful manner.

Inform students that they will be working with a new standard in this lesson: L.9-10.2.a. Instruct students to locate L.9-10.2.a on their 10.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool and to follow along as you read aloud.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently as standard L.9-10.2.a is read aloud.

Pose the following questions for class discussion of L.9-10.2.a. Allow time for students to offer what they know about semicolons.

**What do you notice about this standard?**

**What is it asking you to be able to do?**

**What questions does this standard raise for you?**

Ask students to jot down their ideas. Lead a brief class discussion about L.9-10.2.a.

- 💬 Student responses may include:

- o L.9-10.2.a focuses on grammar.
  - o L.9-10.2.a is asking us to link independent clauses with a semicolon.
  - o A semicolon is a punctuation mark that indicates a pause between two clauses
  - o What is a conjunctive adverb?
- ① If students struggle, consider defining semicolons as “punctuation that serves to link two closely related independent clauses.” If necessary, consider a mini-lesson on the proper use of semicolons in writing. It may also be necessary to review the meaning and use of the terms “clause” and “conjunctive adverb.”
- ① Illustrated web-resource on semicolons: <http://theoatmeal.com/comics/semicolon>

Call students’ attention to Bissinger’s use of a semicolon: “Right before his sophomore year, he informed his mother that he wasn’t coming back to Blanchard; he was going to stay with his father in Odessa so he could play for Permian, even though he had little chance of starting there until his senior year” (p. 82). Ask the following question:

**What function is the semicolon serving in this sentence? What might change if you rewrote the sentence without the semicolon?**

- 💬 The semicolon is linking two independent clauses, and if the sentence were revised to remove the semicolon then it would have to be two separate sentences.

## Activity 2: Homework Accountability

**10%**

Instruct students to talk in pairs about their response to the reflective writing homework prompt: What questions does the Documented and Reconstructed Details Tool raise about the purpose and point of view of the author/narrator in “Dreaming of Heroes”? Alternately, students who chose to add evidence to their Documented and Reconstructed Details Tool should share their revisions.

- 💬 Student responses may vary widely. The goal of this prompt is to encourage critical thinking about the role of the author in creative nonfiction. Possible student questions may include:
  - o Where did Bissinger learn of the thoughts, emotions, and motivations that he reconstructs?
  - o Why doesn’t Bissinger refer to himself in the text?
  - o Why does Bissinger choose to write Mike’s inner thoughts in a voice that contrasts with Mike’s own?
  - o What is Bissinger’s background? What is his point of view? How does this influence how he describes these people?
  - o Did the people Bissinger writes about know he was going to write about them in this way?
  - o What do the residents of Odessa think about Bissinger’s representation of them?

Lead a brief student share out on the annotations that they made in their excerpt preview.

- ▶ Students share their annotations.

### Activity 3: Pages 79–84 Reading and Discussion

**60%**

Introduce the Quick Write assessment (“What connection does Bissinger develop between Don and Charlie Billingsley’s relationship and Permian football?”). Explain to students that this is a lesson assessment and the focus for today’s reading.

- ▶ Students read the assessment prompt and listen.

① Display the assessment prompt for students to see.

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Display or provide the definitions for the following vocabulary words to support student reading: *David and Goliath*, *townies*, *parable*, *lineman*, *hair trigger*, *regaled*, *macho*, *exploits*, *tacit*, *insouciant*, and *tailback*.

Instruct students to independently reread from “There were some kids who came out of Odessa” through “falling down like a tire bouncing along the highway” (pp. 79–80). Organize students into heterogeneous groups that they will remain in for the duration of this lesson. Display the following questions for students to discuss in their groups. Allow time before asking students to share out with the class.

① It may be necessary to spend some time addressing Bissinger’s reference to “a little bashing at the local gay bar” (p. 79) in this excerpt. Issues of homophobia and racism are prevalent throughout this text, and must be dealt with in a thoughtful, critical, and collaborative environment. See question 2 on page 8 “how does Don establish his behavior....” for a question that scaffolds a similarly sensitive situation.

- ▶ Students read independently and then discuss the following questions in their groups, individually writing down observations in preparation for full class discussion.

**How does Bissinger’s description of the rodeo bull help you to understand the meaning of *ornery* in this context (p. 79)?**

- ☛ The bull is probably angry and in pain because it has a “rope wrapped tight around his balls.” Students should deduce that *ornery* means “angry and mean, in opposition to some kind of pain.”

**What portrait of life in Odessa is Bissinger crafting through the cumulative effect of his descriptions of a “good time” (p. 79)?**

- Bissinger's descriptions of a good time: "look for fights," "do a little bashing," "bite into the steaming flesh of a fresh killed rabbit," "down a cockroach," and "go rattlesnake hunting" (p. 79) to infer that Bissinger is crafting a portrait of life in Odessa that is physical and violent (as evidenced by the verbs *bash*, *fight*, *hunt*, and *bite*).

① Some students may make a connection between these activities and rural life, as many of these activities deal with hunting, animals, and wildlife.

### Why might Bissinger find these "ornery" (p. 79) kids "admirable" (p. 80)?

- Bissinger compares these "ornery" kids to a bull with a rider, trying to buck it off. Some students might cite the related comparison between these kids and David in the story of David and Goliath. Listen for students to infer that Bissinger finds their "fearlessness" in the face of a more powerful opponent admirable (p. 80).

### Who do these kids see as their opponents? What position do they occupy in these fights?

- These kids see the "townies from Andrews or Crane" as their opponents (p. 79). Other students may suggest that they see the "fat-assed lineman" from another team that they can't wait to knock down as their opponent (p. 80). Students should call upon their understanding of the comparison between these kids and rodeo bulls and David to indicate that they occupy the position of the underdog in these fights.

### What relationship is Bissinger establishing between football and the "damn rope" "wrapped tight around [their] balls" (p. 79)?

- Student responses should indicate a connection between the hardships these kids face and their desire to play football. Some students might suggest that these "ornery" kids want to play a contact sport because the "rope" that confines them makes them mean, irritable, and violent (p. 79). Others might suggest that the violence of their lives, the constant "buck[ing]" (p. 79) off of painful constraints, has left them "fearless[]" (p. 80) and eager to take on big and strong opponents, perhaps to prove that despite the weight of their "rider" they have not been beaten, and that they remain unafraid (p. 79).

Circulate and assist only as needed. Lead a brief full class discussion.

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Instruct students to read aloud in their groups from "Charlie Billingsley may not have been the meanest kid ever" through "913 yards to lead the team as a senior" (p. 80). Display the following questions for students to discuss in their groups. Allow time before asking students to share out with the class.

- ▶ Students read independently and then discuss the following questions in their group, independently writing down observations in preparation for full class discussion.

**How does Bissinger’s description of Charlie Billingsley connect to his earlier description of “ornery” kids (p. 79)?**

- 💬 Charlie is one of the “ornery” kids Bissinger describes (p. 79). Bissinger describes Charlie as not the “meanest kid ever at Permian, but he was somewhere near the top,” mirroring his earlier description of “lean and mean” kids (p. 80). He also writes that Charlie loved to fight (as evidenced by “put up his fists right there,” “he won a lot [of fights] and lost a few,” “the minute the season was over, he got into a fight” (p. 80)), which connects to his description that the kids thought a “good time” was having “fights with townies” (p. 79).

**Despite his behavior, what kept Charlie out of “trouble” (p. 80)?**

- 💬 Despite Charlie’s bad behavior, his “numbers” in football keep him out of trouble (p. 80). He is a talented football player and helps his team to succeed. Despite being a “hell-raiser,” he is a valuable and valued member of the community (p. 80).

Lead a brief full class discussion.

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Instruct students to reread aloud in their groups from “Those were great days back then, great days” through “an unexpected element entered his life: his son Don” (pp. 81–82).

- ① It may be necessary to spend additional time addressing Charlie Billingsley’s statement “those inbred Okies, they didn’t take kindly to the pros from Dover” (p. 81). As with the sensitive material on pages 79 and 83, it is important that students practice engaging with this controversial material and the assumptions, prejudices, and conflicts it reveals, in a productive, critical, and thoughtful manner.

**How was Charlie’s life “never quite the same” after high school (p. 81)?**

- 💬 Students responses may include evidence from the description of Charlie Billingsley’s time in college (“you were a whole lot more expendable in college, a hero one day and a broken-down nobody the next, and if you didn’t like it no one really gave a crap because there was always a bunch of guys ready to replace you in a second” (p. 81)), while he was travelling (“...loaded down with the baggage of too much booze...and too many wives... still casting around for the proper fit twenty years out of high school, still trying to find the way home” (p. 81)), or after he returned to Odessa (“He floated from one job to another, some of them good, some of them not so good” (p. 81)). Student responses should indicate an understanding that once Charlie left the



spotlight of high school football, he could not regain the same sense of belonging and of being someone special. He spends the rest of his life unsuccessfully searching for the things he has lost.

Lead a brief full class discussion.

- ① **Remind students not to repeat key details that have already been offered in discussion to ensure brevity.**
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Instruct students to read aloud in their groups from “Whether he knew it or not, Don had become” through “at least for as long as the season lasted” (pp. 83–84).

Display the following questions for students to discuss in their groups. Allow time before asking students to share out with the class:

**What is implied in Bissinger’s description of Don as “Charlie Billingsley reborn seventeen years later” (p. 83)?**

- 💬 Students should infer that Bissinger is implying that Don is headed down the same path, good or bad, that Charlie took in life.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider asking the following question to provide additional scaffolding:

**How does Don establish his reputation? What preconceptions does his behavior reveal?**

- 💬 Don establishes his reputation by “mixing it up with kids who were a whole lot bigger” and gets into a fight with Boobie. His words (“those niggers, they talk a lot” (p. 83)) and actions (“wasn’t intimidated” and “took him down easily” (p. 83)) suggest that Don holds offensive preconceptions based on race.
- ① This is a highly sensitive racially charged moment in the text. Addressing it in this passage is crucial for students to be able to access and analyze the complex race relations in this text. It is important to establish and model classroom norms and expectations for a respectful and critical approach to sensitive topics in an academic context.

**How does Odessa’s collective memory compare to the portrait Bissinger offers of Charlie? What is forgotten in Odessa in order to “dream [...] of heroes”?**

- 💬 The town of Odessa remembers Charlie for his success in football in high school, where he was “the most valuable offensive player in the district” (p. 84). They remember him as a “hero,” not a “broken-down nobody” (p. 81), even though he has grown up to be a drunk with no job. Listen for students to infer that the residents of Odessa “forget” all of Charlie’s failures in order to keep dreaming of heroes.

**What might the status Charlie retains in Odessa suggest about the social pressures placed on Don?**

- Because Don and Charlie are regarded as the same, “spitting image,” “like his father” (p. 83), the town might expect Don to be as much of a “hero” as his father was (p. 81) and to have the same skills and success in football.

**How might your understanding of the relationship between Charlie and Don be different if the word “through” was replaced with “for” in the last sentence of paragraph three (p. 84)?**

- If Charlie Billingsley had said of his son, “I got him to live for,” rather than “I got him to live through,” (p. 84) this father/son relationship might appear to be more like the relationship between Mike and Billy. Charlie “lives through” Don’s achievements, indicating that his investment in Don’s success is self-serving. If Charlie had said that he “lived for” his son, this would indicate a pride centered around his son’s accomplishments, rather than an attempt to reestablish his own past glory through Don’s success.

**Activity 4: Quick Write****10%**

Review the Short Response Checklist and Rubric with students. Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the Quick Write prompt. Remind students that they should use a semicolon in their response and that they will be assessed on this skill.

**What connection does Bissinger develop between Don and Charlie Billingsley’s relationship and Permian football? Use key details from the text to support your response.**

- 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 5: Closing****5%**

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread the portion of the chapter they have read thus far and identify at least one central idea of the text.

Additionally, students should continue to read their AIR text, using the lens of focus standard RL.9-10.6 or RI.9-10.6. Students should come in prepared for a 3–5-minute discussion at the beginning of the next lesson based on the focus standard.

## Homework

Reread the chapter thus far and identify at least one central idea. Also, continue reading your AIR text using the lens of focus standard RL.9-10.6 or RI.9-10.6. Come prepared for a 3–5-minute discussion at the beginning of the next lesson based on the focus standard.