

11.1.3

Lesson 3

Introduction

In this lesson, students examine Woolf's point of view and use of rhetoric. Students focus on the excerpt of *A Room of One's Own* (from "But for my part, I agree with the deceased bishop" to "on the length of the winter's night"), in which Woolf develops her point of view about why it would have been "impossible" for a woman to write Shakespeare's works during his time. Students are introduced to RI.11-12.1 and RI.11-12.6 and are assessed through a Silent Discussion about how Woolf uses rhetoric to convey her point of view in the selected text. For homework, students write an objective summary of Woolf's text studied so far and continue with their AIR.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.11-12.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.
Addressed Standard(s)	
RI.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
W.11-12.9.b	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. b. Apply <i>grades 11–12 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., "Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning (e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents) and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy (e.g., The Federalist, presidential addresses).
SL.11-12.1a-e	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

	<p>a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.</p> <p>b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.</p> <p>c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.</p> <p>d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.</p> <p>e. Seek to understand other perspectives and cultures and communicate effectively with audiences or individuals from varied backgrounds.</p>
L.11-12.4.a	<p>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 11–12 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <p>a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</p>
L.11-12.5.a	<p>Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</p> <p>a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., hyperbole, paradox) in context and analyze their role in the text.</p>

Assessment

Assessment(s)

Student learning will be assessed via a Silent Discussion at the end of the lesson. Students answer the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- How does Woolf use rhetoric to convey her point of view?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify an example in which Woolf uses rhetoric.
- Convey an understanding of her point of view.
- Demonstrate how her use of rhetoric contributes to the development of her point of view.

Vocabulary**Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)**

- ducked (v.) – plunged or dipped in water
- dashed (v.) – struck or smashed violently, especially so as to break to pieces
- Anon (n.) – anonymous, unnamed, unknown

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

- None.

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RI.11-12.6, RI.11-12.1, W.11-12.9.b, SL.11-12.1a-e, L.11-12.4.a, L.11-12.5.a • Text: Excerpt from Chapter 3 of <i>A Room of One's Own</i> by Virginia Woolf (pp. 50–51) 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Pages 50–51 Reading and Discussion 4. Silent Discussion 5. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 20% 2. 10% 3. 50% 4. 15% 5. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the 11.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool (refer to 11.1.1 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 of Lesson Agenda

20%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.11-12.6.

- Students look at the agenda.

Explain that students begin working with two new standards and one substandard: RI.11-12.6, RI.11-12.1 and W.11-12.9.b. Ask students to individually reread these standards and assess their familiarity with and mastery of the standards on their 11.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool.

- Students read standards RI.11-12.1, RI.11-12.6, and W.11-12.9.b and assess their familiarity on the 11.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool.
- ❗ Consider asking students to recall the discussions from Unit 2 about fresh, engaging, or beautiful language in relation to RL.11-12.4. Draw their attention to the similarity of language in these standards while making the point that the use of strong rhetoric is in the service of making a persuasive argument.

If Shakespeare used engaging and beautiful language to create new meaning or descriptions of the world, what is the use of beautiful or engaging language in making an argument?

- 💬 Student responses may include:
 - Using engaging language helps to make an argument stronger.
 - Engaging or beautiful language could also make listeners or readers pay more attention to or believe more strongly in an argument.

Explain to students that rhetoric refers to the specific techniques that writers or speakers use to create meaning in a text, enhance a text or a speech, and in particular, persuade readers or listeners. Point out to students that they use rhetoric in everyday speech to persuade others to agree with a particular point

of view. Several rhetorical techniques such as irony, rhetorical questions, and ways of structuring a sentence may be familiar to students. Share with students the following examples of rhetorical techniques and lead a brief discussion of the use of rhetoric in everyday speech. Some examples from today's text include:

- Rhetorical Question: "How, then, could it have been born among women ... by all the power of law and custom?"
- Irony: "It is unthinkable that any woman in Shakespeare's day should have had Shakespeare's genius."
- Sentence structure, listing: "For genius like Shakespeare's is not born among labouring, uneducated, servile people."
- Alliteration: "Bronte or Burns blazes...proves its presence."
 - ▶ Students engage in a conversation about rhetorical devices, led by the teacher.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to form pairs to discuss the previous lesson's homework: Choose one moment from the previous lesson's reading and analyze Woolf's use of language to describe the characters and their actions in that moment. How do her word choices impact the meaning and tone of the text?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Woolf's description of the theater manager as a "fat, loose-lipped man" who "guffaws" conveys a crude, negative image of a man.
- By saying "the birds that sang in the hedge were not more musical than she was" Woolf describes Judith's talent in a vivid way.
- By offering her a "chain of beads or a fine petticoat" if she changes her mind about marrying, Woolf is showing Judith's father resorting to bribery to try and get her to obey.

Activity 3: Pages 50–51 Reading and Discussion

50%

Instruct students to form small groups in order to read the focus excerpt from *A Room of One's Own*, from "But for my part, I agree with the deceased bishop ..." to "on the length of the winter's night" (pp. 51–52) and answer the following questions.

- ① If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the focus excerpt for the lesson.

Woolf states that it is “unthinkable that any woman in Shakespeare’s day should have had Shakespeare’s genius” (p. 50). Compare this assertion to the claims she made about Judith Shakespeare in the previous paragraph.

- ☞ Woolf contradicts herself. She said before that Judith is just as gifted as Shakespeare, but here she states that women in Shakespeare’s time could not be as talented as him.

In addition to women, what other groups does Woolf suggest lack literary genius?

- ☞ She says that genius doesn’t exist among laboring, uneducated, servile people. She says it is not born today among the working classes or in England among the Saxons or Britons.

Determine the meaning of servile by looking at its word parts and the words surrounding it.

- ☞ The beginning looks like “serve” and the words surrounding it are “laboring” and “uneducated” so it could be referring to people who serve others or are below them.
- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.11-12.4.a, b through the process of using context and words parts to make meaning of a word.

What is Woolf’s point of view about why genius rarely exists among women?

- ☞ She says that it does not exist among laboring or servile people.

How does Woolf refine her point of view in this portion of the text?

- ☞ Woolf shows that lack of genius is not a problem that had to do solely with women but was the case among other disadvantaged people.
- ① Consider pointing out to students how Woolf is using the rhetorical technique of creating a list in her sentence structure here.

Read the following excerpt: “How, then, could it have been born among women ... by their parents and held to it by all the power of law and custom?” from page 50.

What is “it” referring to in the excerpt you just read?

- ☞ “It” is referring to literary genius.

What rhetorical device does Woolf use here? How do you know?

- ☞ Rhetorical question, because she already knows the answer.

What does Woolf accomplish by using this device?

- She is emphasizing how difficult it would be for women to possess literary genius, since they were forced to work from the beginning of their lives.

① In this last part of the text, consider providing definitions for the following words:

- ducked –plunged or dipped in water, as in the method for identifying a witch
- dashed – struck or smashed violently, especially so as to break to pieces
- Anon – anonymous or unnamed

What does Woolf suggest is the connection between: “A woman possessed by devils” and “a suppressed poet” on page 50?

- She is saying that those who were accused of being possessed by a Devil could in fact have been suppressed poets or women of literary genius.

① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.11-12.5.a through the process of interpreting figurative language and word relationships.

Lead a brief full-class discussion of student responses.

Inform students that Jane Austen and the Bronte sisters were famous female writers of the 18th and 19th centuries. Robert Burns is considered Scotland’s greatest poet. All these authors were born in circumstances that Woolf identifies as presenting obstacles towards their development and recognition as writers. Then ask students to discuss the following questions in their groups.

Explain what might make “some mute and inglorious Jane Austen” feel or act “crazed.”

- The torture of having a gift and being unable to express or use it would make a woman feel crazed.

What is the connotation of the word “torture”? What is the effect of Woolf’s use of the word “torture” to describe a woman’s experience of being gifted?

- The word “torture” seems violent and painful. Woolf’s use of the word “torture” to describe a woman’s being gifted emphasizes how intensely a woman might suffer.

① Inform students that using such strong, conflicting words such as “torture” and “gifted” is also a use of rhetoric meant to evoke a strong contrast.

What is “its” in this sentence?

- “Its” is referring to “genius of a sort.”

What is “it” blazing out of and why does it have to blaze to prove its presence?

- It must blaze out of poverty or oppression to prove its presence among those classes of people Woolf refers to because people wouldn't believe it exists there.

① Consider drawing students' attention to Woolf's use of alliteration (“Bronte or Burns blazes ... proves its presence”) as another rhetorical device.

“Anon” means anonymous or unnamed. What does Woolf mean that “Anon” was often a woman?

- She means that poems or songs written by authors without names were often women.

Explain to students that these assertions by Woolf are examples of hypotheticals or speculation, which are also forms of rhetoric.

Instruct students to go through the text and annotate for examples of rhetoric. Remind students that annotating will help them keep track of evidence for future assessments. This focused annotation supports students' engagement with W.11-12.9.b, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.

Activity 4: Silent Discussion**15%**

Instruct students to engage in a Silent Discussion with partners based on the following prompt:

How does Woolf use rhetoric to convey her point of view?

Direct students to respond to the prompt and exchange responses with a partner. The partner builds upon or questions the original response before returning the paper to the original writer for comment. This cycle may be completed more than once, at the teacher's discretion. Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide them in their responses.

① Consider instructing students to practice standards SL.11-12.1.a, c, d, which focus on coming to discussions prepared, asking questions to propel the discussion, and responding to diverse perspectives.

Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to use the vocabulary from Lessons 1–3 to write an objective summary of the text studied in Lessons 1–3. Also, students should continue to read their AIR text through the lens of new focus standard RI.11-12.6 or RL.11-12.6.

Introduce standard RI.11-12.6 or RL.11-12.6 (for those students reading literature) as a focus standard to guide students' AIR, and model what applying a focus standard looks like. Explain to students that they should prepare for a brief 3–5 minute discussion that will ask them to apply the language of the standards to their reading.

For example, RI.11-12.6 asks students to “Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.” Students who read today’s focus excerpt might say: “Woolf lists other groups of oppressed people to develop her point of view that the lack of famous female writers throughout history was not a problem innate to the sex.” Students reading the passage through the lens of RL.11-12.6 would provide a similar answer.

- ▶ Students listen.

Homework

Using vocabulary from Lessons 1–3, write an objective summary of the text studied in Lessons 1–3.

Continue to read your AIR text through the lens of the assigned focus standard (RI.11-12.6 or RL.11-12.6) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.