

## 10.2.2

## Lesson 1

## Introduction

In this first lesson of the unit, students read and analyze paragraphs 1–6 of Julia Alvarez’s “A Genetics of Justice” (from “Perhaps because I was spared, at ten” to “in many of my mother’s cautionary tales”), in which Alvarez begins to provide her reason for writing the essay and to explain the dictator Rafael Trujillo’s impact on her mother. Students engage in small group discussions and analyze how Alvarez unfolds Trujillo’s impact on her mother’s life in her essay. Student learning culminates in a Quick Write on the following prompt: Analyze how Alvarez unfolds Trujillo’s impact on her mother in paragraphs 1–6.

For homework, students read Mark Memmott’s article “Remembering To Never Forget” and develop their own questions about Rafael Trujillo and then conduct a brief search for information to answer those questions.

## 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.
Addressed Standard(s)	
L.9-10.4.a	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 9–10 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. 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.

## Assessment

Assessment(s)
Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students answer the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- Analyze how Alvarez unfolds Trujillo's impact on her mother in paragraphs 1–6.

① Throughout this unit, Quick Writes will be evaluated using the Short Response Rubric.

### High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Establish Trujillo's impact on Alvarez's mother (e.g., When Alvarez's mother was a girl she daydreamed about him when she would fantasize about "meeting the great love of her life." Once she found out the truth about Trujillo and his dictatorship she became "doubly revolted" by him and Trujillo became an obsession for her once she was in exile).
- Analyze how Alvarez unfolds this impact (e.g., Alvarez unfolds Trujillo's impact on her mother by showing how and why Alvarez's mother's understanding of Trujillo changed over time, from "want[ing] to meet the great man" because she did not know Trujillo's "true nature," to being "doubly revolted" by and obsessed with "this cold-blooded monster" once she learns the truth about Trujillo).

## Vocabulary

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

- Generalísimo (n.) – the commander of a combined military force consisting of army, navy, and air force units
- regime (n.) – a system of rule or government
- El Jefe (n.) – "the Chief" or "the Boss"
- la Virgencita (n.) – the Virgin Mary, Jesus' Mother, from the Bible
- bicorne (n.) – a two-cornered cocked hat worn especially in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries
- beneficently (adv.) – kindly in action or in purpose

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

- genetics (n.) – the study of inherited characteristics

## 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.9-10.4.a</li> <li>Text: “A Genetics of Justice” by Julia Alvarez, paragraphs 1–6</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>Masterful Reading</li> <li>Homework Accountability</li> <li>Reading and Discussion</li> <li>Quick Write</li> <li>Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5%</li> <li>40%</li> <li>10%</li> <li>25%</li> <li>15%</li> <li>5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

- Copies of “A Genetics of Justice” for each student (with the paragraphs numbered 1–31)
- Copies of the Central Ideas Tracking Tool for each student (refer to 10.2.1 Lesson 5)—Students will need blank copies of the tool for this lesson.
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 10.2.1 Lesson 1)

① Consider numbering the paragraphs of “A Genetics of Justice” before the lesson.

## 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.
①	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

## Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standards for this lesson: RI.9-10.3. In this lesson, students analyze how Alvarez unfolds Trujillo's impact on her mother in paragraphs 1–6. Students engage in evidence-based discussion and complete a brief writing assignment to close the lesson.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

## Activity 2: Masterful Reading

40%

Distribute copies of “A Genetics of Justice” to each student. Have students listen to a Masterful Reading of all 31 paragraphs. Inform students that they will pause at six points during the essay (after paragraphs 5, 11, 18, 21, and 25) to write down their initial questions and reactions to the text.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently then writing their initial reactions and questions.

Lead a brief class share out of students' initial reactions and questions. Remind students that as they analyze the text throughout the unit, they will answer many of these initial questions.

## Activity 3: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied their focus standard to their 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 and share how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text.

## Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

25%

Provide students with the following definitions: *Generalísimo* means “the commander of a combined military force consisting of army, navy, and air force units,” *regime* means “a system of rule or government,” *El Jefe* means “the Chief or the Boss,” *La Virgencita* means “the Virgin Mary, Jesus' Mother, from the Bible,” *bicorn* means “a two-cornered cocked hat worn especially in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries” and *beneficently* means “kindly in action or in purpose.”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *Generalísimo*, *regime*, *El Jefe*, *la Virgencita*, *bicorn*, and *beneficently* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Distribute the Central Ideas Tracking Tool so that students may track central ideas.

Instruct student groups to reread paragraphs 1–4 (from “Perhaps because I was spared” to “my mother could not know the portrait was heavily retouched”) and answer the following questions in groups before sharing out with the class.

**How does Alvarez begin her essay?**

- ☞ She begins her essay by speculating about why she “often imagine[s]” her parents’ lives, particularly her mother’s, “growing up under the absolute rule of Generalísimo Rafael Trujillo” (par. 1).

**How does this beginning inform your understanding of the word *genetics* in the title?**

- ☞ *Genetics* has to do with family, heritage, and inheritance.
- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.9-10.4.a through the process of using context to determine meaning.

**Given your answer to the previous question, what might Alvarez mean by “A Genetics of Justice”?**

- ☞ She might mean a justice that is inherited from one generation to the next.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider providing them with the following definition: *genetics* means “the study of inherited characteristics.” Also, explain to students that they will revisit the title at the end of reading the essay.
  - ▶ Students write the definition of *genetics* on their copy of the text or a vocabulary journal.

**What reason does Alvarez provide to explain why she “often imagine[s]” her parents’ lives under Trujillo in paragraph 1?**

- ☞ She believes she imagines their lives because she was spared from having to live under Trujillo’s dictatorship.

**Why does Alvarez “especially” imagine her mother’s life in paragraph 2?**

- ☞ She especially imagines her mother’s life as a young girl because “Trujillo was known to have an appetite for pretty young girls . . . there was no refusing him,” so as a young girl, her mother was in the most danger of being taken by Trujillo (par. 2).
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider asking the following question:

**How does Alvarez use specific word choices to deepen your understanding of Trujillo?**

- ☞ Alvarez uses descriptive words and phrases like “appetite” and “his eye was caught” to describe Trujillo’s interest in “pretty girls” (par. 2).

**Why are Alvarez’s grandparents “afraid to say anything—even to their own children” about Trujillo’s regime in paragraph 3?**

- They are afraid because Trujillo has committed “horrid crimes” and might do so to them or their children, so they stay silent (par. 3).

① Consider giving students the word *silence* as a way to discuss Trujillo’s control over the people, as silence develops as a central idea throughout the text.

**How does Alvarez’s grandparents’ fear of Trujillo affect Alvarez’s mother in paragraphs 2–3?**

- Because Alvarez’s mother is kept “out of the public eye” (par. 2) and because Alvarez’s grandparents are afraid of Trujillo, Alvarez’s mother “knew nothing of the horrid crimes of the dictatorship” (par. 3).

**What is the impact of Alvarez’s repetition of “must have” in paragraph 3?**

- Alvarez shows that she is not sure what her mother thought of Trujillo.

**How does the statement, “She knew nothing of the horrid crimes of the dictatorship” refine your understanding of Alvarez’s use of “must have” to describe her mother’s opinion of Trujillo in paragraph 3?**

- Alvarez speculates that her mother “must have been intrigued” or thought of Trujillo as a “movie star” or “wanted to meet the great man” because her mother did not know that he was a violent criminal (par. 3).

**How does the evidence Alvarez provides in paragraph 4 support her use of “must have” in paragraph 3?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Alvarez shows that her mother did daydream about Trujillo, imagining that he “looked down beneficently at [her] as she read her romantic novellas and dreamed of meeting the great love of her life” (par. 4).
  - Alvarez continues, “Sometimes in her daydreams, her great love wore the handsome young dictator’s face,” to show Trujillo’s influence on her mother (par. 4).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Instruct students to track central ideas throughout paragraphs 1–4.

Instruct students to reread paragraphs 5–6 (from “By the time my mother married my father” to “his excesses figured in many of my mother’s cautionary tales”) and answer the following questions in groups before sharing out with the class.

**What is the “true nature” of Trujillo’s dictatorship as explained to Alvarez’s mother by her father?**

- Trujillo killed or “disappeared” “thousands” of people and ordered “the overnight slaughter of some eighteen thousand Haitians” (par. 5). He is a racist, “cold-blooded monster” (par. 6).

**How does Alvarez’s mother’s previous understanding of Trujillo impact her feelings about him once she learns about his “true nature”?**

- Because Alvarez’s mother had “innocently revered him” she became “doubly revolted” by Trujillo (par. 6).

**How does the word “obsession” in paragraph 6 develop your understanding of Trujillo’s impact on Alvarez’s mother in paragraph 4?**

- An “obsession” (par. 6) is something you think about all the time, much like Alvarez’s mother daydreamed about “meeting the great love of her life” (par. 4) who wore Trujillo’s face, except in paragraph 6 it is negative, not like a romantic daydream.
- ① Some students may recognize that Alvarez is introducing trauma as a central idea here. Students who do not yet recognize this central idea will have an opportunity to explore it in 10.2.2 Lesson 3.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Instruct students to track central ideas in paragraphs 5–6 with the Central Ideas Tracking Tool.

**Activity 5: Quick Write****15%**

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

**Analyze how Alvarez unfolds Trujillo’s impact on her mother in paragraphs 1–6.**

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses. 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 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 and copies of “Remembering To Never Forget” by Mark Memmott. For homework, instruct students to read “Remembering To Never Forget” and box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Instruct them to choose the definition that makes the most sense in the context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text. Then, ask students to develop their own questions about Rafael Trujillo’s dictatorship and conduct a brief search for information to answer those questions.

① Encourage students to use media and print resources at school, home, or public libraries to facilitate their searches.

- ▶ Students follow along.

## Homework

Read “Remembering To Never Forget” by Mark Memmott. Box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in the context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text. Then, develop your own questions about Rafael Trujillo’s dictatorship and conduct a brief search for information to answer those questions.



## Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

<b>Name:</b>		<b>Class:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
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**Directions:** Identify the central ideas that you encounter throughout the text. Trace the development of those ideas by noting how authors introduce, develop, or refine ideas in the texts. Cite text evidence to support your work.

<b>Text:</b>	"A Genetics of Justice"
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Paragraph #	Central Ideas	Notes and Connections
2	Silence	Alvarez's mother is "kept out of the public eye" and so cannot learn about Trujillo.
3	Silence	Develops on paragraph 2, as Alvarez's grandparents are too "afraid to say anything—even to their own children—against the regime," so Alvarez's mother does not learn the truth about Trujillo.
4	Silence	Alvarez's mother "could not know the portrait [of Trujillo] was heavily retouched," because her mother had been kept in the dark up to this point in the text.
5	Silence	Trujillo "disappeared" people who tried to "return the country to democracy."
6	Trauma	Because Alvarez's mother "had innocently revered" Trujillo, she became "doubly revolted" by him and became obsessed with him.