

10.2.2**Lesson 6****Introduction**

In this lesson, students read and analyze paragraphs 16–19 of “A Genetics of Justice” (from “On May 30, 1961, nine months after our escape” to “sent back to where we had come from”), in which Alvarez describes Trujillo’s downfall and the ongoing effects on her parents’ psyche of living under his rule. Students engage in evidence-based discussion, exploring how Alvarez develops ideas of trauma and silence. Students then demonstrate their learning through a Quick Write on the following prompt: In paragraph 19, how does Alvarez develop and refine the ideas from paragraphs 16–18? For homework, students preview the text for 10.2.2 Lesson 7, paragraphs 20–22, annotating for central ideas. Also, students carry out a brief search into the Mirabal sisters, and continue to read their AIR text and prepare for a brief discussion on how they applied their chosen focus standard to their text.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.9-10.5	Analyze in detail how an author’s ideas or claims are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or longer portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
Addressed Standard(s)	
None.	

Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In paragraph 19, how does Alvarez develop and refine the ideas from paragraphs 16–18?
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify an idea developed in paragraphs 16–18 (e.g., trauma, silence, etc.). Discuss how Alvarez further develops this idea in paragraph 19 (e.g., in paragraphs 16–18, Alvarez

develops the central idea of trauma by contrasting the “internal” consequences of Trujillo’s fall with the “external” consequences (par. 17) and by describing how “[e]ven on American soil,” her parents were afraid to speak against authority because “[t]he First Amendment right to free speech meant nothing to them” (par. 18). She further develops the idea of trauma in paragraph 19 by describing her parents’ silence about their escape from the Dominican Republic and their mixed feelings about the United States: on the one hand, America is “this great country that had offered my parents a refuge,” but on the other hand, “this same United States . . . had helped put our dictator in place.” As a result of the trauma that they have suffered, Alvarez’s parents remain silent “afraid that ungratefulness would result in our being sent back to where we had come from” (par. 19).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- exorcism (n.) – the act or process of driving away or attempting to drive away evil spirits
- habits (n.) – acquired behavior patterns regularly followed until they have become almost involuntary
- repression (n.) – the act of using force to control someone or something; the state of being controlled by force; the act of not allowing a memory, feeling, or desire to be expressed
- censorship (n.) – the act of controlling or repressing the behavior of others
- SIM (n.) – Servicio de Inteligencia Militar (Military Intelligence Service), the main instrument of control in the Dominican Republic under Trujillo
- verge (n.) – edge, rim, or margin of something

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.9-10.5 • Text: “A Genetics of Justice” by Julia Alvarez, paragraphs 16–19 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 	1. 5%

2. Homework Accountability	2. 10%
3. Masterful Reading	3. 5%
4. Reading and Discussion	4. 60%
5. Quick Write	5. 15%
6. Closing	6. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Central Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 10.2.1 Lesson 5)—Students may need blank copies of the tool if they have run out of space on their original tool.
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric (refer to 10.2.1 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

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and assessed standard for this lesson: RL.9-10.5. In this lesson, students explore how Alvarez introduces, develops, and refines ideas in paragraphs 16–19. Students engage in evidence-based discussion as well as complete a Quick Write to close the lesson.

- 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 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.

Instruct student pairs to share and discuss the vocabulary words they identified and defined in the previous lesson's homework.

- 💬 Students may identify the following words: *exorcism*, *habits*, *repression*, *censorship*, *SIM*, and *verge*.

① Definitions are provided in the Vocabulary box in this lesson.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Have students listen to a Masterful Reading of “A Genetics of Justice,” paragraphs 16–19 (from “On May 30, 1961, nine months after our escape” to “sent back to where we had come from”). Ask students to follow along and listen for details that introduce, develop, and refine ideas in the essay.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

60%

Instruct students to form pairs. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss.

Instruct student pairs to read paragraph 16 (from “On May 30, 1961, nine months after our escape” to “Trujillo was brought to justice, found guilty and executed”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

How does Alvarez choose to relate her family's escape from the Dominican Republic in paragraph 16?

- 💬 She does so briefly: she moves forward in time to recount Trujillo's downfall, with only a short reference to the fact that these events took place “nine months after our escape from our homeland” (par. 16).

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with these questions, consider posing the following questions:

What is Alvarez's purpose in paragraph 16?

- 💬 Alvarez's purpose is to describe how Trujillo was finally “brought to justice” (par. 16).

What details does Alvarez reveal about her family's escape from the Dominican Republic?

- 💬 Alvarez does not reveal any details about the escape.

What questions does Alvarez leave unanswered about her family's escape from the Dominican Republic?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Alvarez does not tell why her family left when they did.
- Alvarez does not tell how her family escaped.

Analyze the difference in meaning and tone in the first and last sentences of paragraph 16. How do Alvarez's specific word choices create this difference?

💬 Student responses may include:

- In the first sentence of the paragraph, Alvarez calls those who killed Trujillo "plotters," implying illegal activity, and states that they "assassinated" Trujillo, suggesting murder.
- In the final sentence of the paragraph, Alvarez describes Trujillo's death as a process of justice. She says that he was "brought to justice," and "found guilty," suggesting a trial. The word *executed* also implies a legal process leading up to his death.

What is the impact of this change in tone?

💬 By referring to the death as an "ajusticiamiento," a "bringing to justice," and an "execution," Alvarez justifies the assassination, making it seem more acceptable to the reader.

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

Instruct student pairs to reread and analyze paragraph 17 (from "But the execution was an external event" to "between the Island and our apartment in New York") and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

What contrast does Alvarez establish around the death of Trujillo in the opening sentence of paragraph 17?

💬 She establishes a contrast between the "external" and the "internal" consequences of Trujillo's assassination.

What does this contrast suggest about the internal consequences of Trujillo's assassination?

💬 This contrast suggests that while externally, Trujillo was gone and the Dominican Republic was free of his rule, internally (inside the minds of Dominicans) he was still alive as a dictator: "my parents, along with a nation of Dominicans, had learned the habits of repression, censorship, terror" (par. 17).

What is the impact of Alvarez’s choice of the word *exorcism*?

☞ Student responses may include:

- *Exorcism* implies a demon or other supernatural figure, suggesting that Trujillo was some kind of monster or devil.
- Some students may note that the image of an exorcism refers to the contrast between “internal” and “external”: an *exorcism* suggests something internal that needs to be expelled.

① Consider reminding students of the definition of *exorcism*, which they likely looked up for homework: *exorcism* means “the act or process of expelling or driving away evil spirits.”

- ▶ Students write the definition of *exorcism* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What is the impact of Alvarez’s choice of the word *habits* in paragraph 17?

☞ Student responses may include:

- *Habits* implies behavior that is done without thinking. By using this word, Alvarez suggests that Dominicans are so used to “repression, censorship, terror” that they act as though Trujillo were still in power even after his fall.
- The “habits” are something that Alvarez’s parents have “learned” for “all their lives,” so they “[do] not disappear” overnight (par. 17).

How does Alvarez use rhetorical devices and word choices to emphasize the internal consequences of living under Trujillo’s rule?

☞ Student responses may include:

- Alvarez uses repetition to highlight the continued fear: she repeats the word *habits* and the phrase “would not disappear.”
- She refers to the journey to the United States as “a plane ride north that put hundreds of miles distance between the Island and our apartment in New York,” emphasizing that even though they continue to live as though they were still living under Trujillo, the Alvarez family are in fact “hundreds of miles” away from the Dominican Republic.

How does Alvarez develop the central idea of trauma in paragraph 17?

☞ Student responses may include:

- Alvarez establishes a contrast between the external “event” of Trujillo’s fall from power and the continued internal effects of his rule.

- In emphasizing that Dominicans “had learned the habits of repression, censorship, terror” and that these habits “would not disappear” overnight (par. 17), Alvarez develops the idea that trauma has lasting consequences that cannot be resolved by external events alone.

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion of student responses. Distribute or ask students to take out their Central Ideas Tracking Tool and record how the central idea has developed in paragraphs 16 and 17.

Instruct student pairs to reread and analyze paragraph 18 (from “And so, long after we had left” to “Silence about anything ‘political’ was the rule in our house”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

What is the impact of Alvarez’s specific word choice in the phrase “on American soil” from paragraph 18? How does this develop an idea from paragraph 17?

💬 Student responses may include:

- The phrase “on American soil” shows that externally, the Alvarez family is far away from the Dominican Republic, repeating the idea that there are “hundreds of miles” between them and their homeland in paragraph 17.
- By highlighting the contrast between the Alvarez family’s external circumstances of freedom and their internal experience of continued fear of the Trujillo regime, Alvarez develops the idea of trauma.

What are the “awful consequences” that Alvarez’s parents fear?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Some students may refer back to Alvarez’s description of the horrors of the Trujillo regime in paragraph 5, where Alvarez recounts that “[t]housands had lost their lives in failed attempts to return the country to democracy.”
- Some students may note that Alvarez does not specify in paragraph 18 what these “awful consequences” may be: she leaves the question unanswered, making these “consequences” seem less clear and therefore scarier.

How does Alvarez further develop the central idea of trauma from paragraph 17 to 18?

- 💬 Alvarez notes in paragraph 17 that the habits of terror “would not disappear” on the plane ride to New York. In paragraph 18, she develops this further by describing the continued impact of living under Trujillo’s rule, which lasts even after the family arrives in New York, “[e]ven on American soil,” stating that “the First Amendment right to free speech meant nothing to [her parents].”

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider asking the following question:

How does Alvarez's parents' behavior reflect the trauma of living under Trujillo?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Alvarez's parents "were still living in the dictatorship inside their own heads" (par. 18).
- They respond to this trauma by remaining silent "about anything 'political'" (par. 18).

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion of student responses. Ask students to use their Central Ideas Tracking Tools to record how central ideas have developed in paragraph 18.

Instruct students to reread and analyze paragraph 19 (from "In fact, my parents rarely spoke about the circumstances of our leaving the Island" to "sent back to where we had come from") and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

How does Alvarez introduce and develop the idea of silence in paragraphs 18 and 19?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Alvarez notes in paragraph 18 that her parents are specifically afraid to speak out or to disagree with authority.
- Alvarez further develops the idea of silence by stating that the "First Amendment right to freedom of speech meant nothing to [her parents]" (par. 18).
- In the final sentence of paragraph 18, she concludes, "Silence about anything 'political' was the rule in our house."
- The quotation marks around *political* suggest that the definition of *political* was very wide and that the silence applied to many issues, not only political ones.
- Alvarez describes how her parents "rarely spoke" of their departure from the Dominican Republic: even to their daughters, they only give "the official story" (par. 19).
- Alvarez tells us not what her parents told her, but rather what she and her sisters "were not told" (par. 19).
- Alvarez reveals that this fear goes beyond matters connected to the Dominican Republic, since her parents are afraid of authority and of criticizing authority even in the United States: "[M]y parents were silent, afraid that ungratefulness would result in our being sent back to where we had come from" (par. 19).

How does Alvarez build a sense of urgency around her family's situation before leaving the Dominican Republic?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Alvarez uses sentence structure and punctuation to build a sense of urgency: she merges three sentences into one long sentence, separated only by semicolons, to create the sense of piling up, of the building of pressure.
- Alvarez italicizes the word *escaped* to give it extra emphasis.
- Alvarez creates mystery or tension by using references that would not be obvious to outsiders but which would be full of meaning to Dominicans: she refers to the *SIM* and their black Volkswagens.

① Consider reminding students of the meaning of *SIM* that they likely looked up for homework: *SIM* means “Servicio de Inteligencia Militar (Military Intelligence Service), the main instrument of control in the Dominican Republic under Trujillo,” who often drove black Volkswagens.

How does Alvarez support her claim that “this great country that had offered my parents a refuge had also created the circumstances that made them have to seek refuge in the first place” (paragraph 19)?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Alvarez cites the role of the United States in bringing Trujillo to power in 1916 to 1924, during their occupation of the Dominican Republic.
- She quotes the Secretary of State Cordell Hull’s remark that “Trujillo is an SOB, but at least he’s our SOB” (par. 19).

What does the United States represent to Alvarez’s parents in paragraph 19? How does this develop an idea from paragraphs 16–18?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Alvarez’s parents have mixed feelings towards the United States.
- On the one hand, the United States represents a “refuge” and “this great country” to Alvarez’s parents.
- On the other hand, the United States was partially responsible for putting Trujillo in power in the Dominican Republic.
- Even though Alvarez’s parents see the United States as a refuge, they are still afraid of what could happen if they challenge authority in any way: “About all these matters, my parents were silent, afraid that ungratefulness would result in our being sent back to where we had come from” (par. 19).
- These mixed feelings and the continued habits of fear and repression even in the United States further develop the ideas of silence and trauma from paragraphs 16–18.

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion of student responses. Ask students to use their Central Ideas Tracking Tools to record how central ideas have developed in paragraph 19.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

In paragraph 19, how does Alvarez develop and refine the ideas from paragraphs 16–18?

Instruct students to look at their annotations and Idea Tracking Tools 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.

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.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate paragraphs 20–22 (from “My mother, especially, lived in terror of the consequences” to “I was a real thorn in my mother’s side”) for central ideas, using the annotation code “CI.” Direct students to 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.

Additionally, instruct students to conduct a brief search into the Mirabal sisters and write a short paragraph explaining who they were and their significance in the history of the Dominican Republic.

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

▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Read and annotate paragraphs 20–22 (from “My mother, especially, lived in terror of the consequences” to “I was a real thorn in my mother’s side”) for central ideas, using the annotation code “CI.” Box any unfamiliar words, look up their definitions, and choose the definition that makes the most sense in the context and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.

Additionally, conduct a brief search into the Mirabal sisters and write a short paragraph explaining who they were and their significance in the history of the Dominican Republic.

Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Identify the central ideas that you encounter throughout the text. Trace the development of those ideas by noting how the author introduces, develops, or refines these ideas in the texts. Cite textual evidence to support your work.

Text:	"A Genetics of Justice"
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Paragraph #	Central Ideas	Notes and Connections
18–19	Silence	<p>Alvarez notes in paragraph 18 that her parents are specifically afraid to speak out or to disagree with authority and remarks that the First Amendment right to freedom of speech "meant nothing to them."</p> <p>In the final sentence of paragraph, she claims that: "silence about anything 'political' was the rule in our house" (par. 18), implying through her use of quotation marks that "political" was a broad category.</p> <p>In paragraph 19, Alvarez highlights the silence that surrounds the family's departure from the Dominican Republic: even to their daughters, they only provide the official story and her parents "rarely spoke" of their escape.</p> <p>In contrast to her account of her mother's "cautionary tales," Alvarez does not tell us much in paragraphs 18–19 about what her parents say, but rather what she and her sisters "were not told."</p> <p>Alvarez reveals that her parents' fear extends beyond matters connected to the Dominican Republic and that they fear authority even in the United States: "my parents were silent, afraid that ungratefulness would result in our being sent back to where we had come from" (par. 19).</p> <p>By referring to the Dominican Republic as "the Island" or "where we had come from" (par. 19), Alvarez creates a sense of mystery and emphasizes her parents' fear of speaking openly about their homeland.</p>

Paragraph #	Central Ideas	Notes and Connections
17	Trauma	Alvarez draws a contrast between the “external event” of Trujillo’s fall from power and the “internal exorcism” (par. 17), which does not take place and notes that “the habits of repression, censorship, terror” (par. 17) remain strong.