

12.1.1

Lesson 3

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze a section from chapter 2 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, pages 35–40 (from “The summer of 1940, in Lansing, I caught the Greyhound Bus” to “I’d probably still be a brainwashed black Christian”), in which Malcolm X describes leaving Lansing for the more metropolitan Boston and explains how this period of his life affected him. Additionally, students engage in a discussion around the concept of character development and its role in constructing narrative. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Malcolm Little develop over the course of chapter 2?

For homework, students read chapter 3 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Students also develop questions focused on how individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.11-12.3	Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.11-12.2.e	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content. e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
L.11-12.4.a	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 11–12 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)
<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"> How does Malcolm Little develop over the course of chapter 2?
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain how Malcolm Little develops over the course of the chapter (e.g., Malcolm develops through his trip to Boston to stay with Ella. He starts out as someone who “couldn’t have looked much more obvious” (p. 35) about his rural origins. During his time in Boston he is exposed to people “whose big-city talk and ways” (p. 36) astonish him. After this trip he “drew away from white people” (p. 38) as he no longer felt comfortable in their presence and longed for what he calls “a mass of my own kind” (p. 37). This feeling is magnified after a conversation with his teacher in which Malcolm realizes that he would never be “intelligent enough, in their eyes, to become whatever [he] wanted to be” (p. 38). Through these events Malcolm realizes that as long as he stays in Lansing he will never be anything more than a “Mascot” for the community. Malcolm X ends the chapter by calling the trip to Boston “pivotal and profound” (p. 39) and praising Allah that he went to Boston, which shows that these events inspire him to take action for his own future. Malcolm X has separated himself from the “brainwashed” African Americans and is no longer reliant on “two-faced whites” (p. 40) in order to live his life.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feigned (v.) – made believe; pretended pivotal (adj.) – of vital or critical importance profound (adj.) – of deep meaning; of great and broadly inclusive significance menial (adj.) – lowly and sometimes degrading
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> gawked (v.) – stared stupidly; gaped treading (v.) – stepping or walking on, about, in, or along

Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)

- carpentry (n.) – the skill or work of making or fixing wooden objects or wooden parts of buildings
- arrangements (n.) – something that is done to prepare or plan for something in the future
- masses (n.) – a large number of people

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RI.11-12.3, W.11-12.2.e, L.11-12.4.a • Text: <i>The Autobiography of Malcolm X</i> as told to Alex Haley, Chapter 2, pages 35–40 Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Reading and Discussion 4. Analyzing Character Development 5. Quick Write 6. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 10% 2. 15% 3. 40% 4. 15% 5. 15% 6. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the 12.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool (refer to 12.1.1 Lesson 1) (optional)
- Copies of the Character Development Tool for each student (optional)
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.1.1 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.
①	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

10%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and sharing the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.11-12.3. In this lesson, students read and discuss chapter 2 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, pages 35–40, focusing on Malcolm X’s development over an excerpt of the text. Additionally, students engage in a group discussion around the concept of character development in narrative, focusing on how individuals and events interact and develop over the course of the text.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout the lesson:

What events happen in this chapter? How do they change Malcolm Little?

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students are using the 12.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool, instruct them to refer to it for this portion of the lesson introduction.

Post or project standards RI.11-12.3, W.11-12.2.e, and L.11-12.4.a. Instruct students to focus on RI.11-12.3 and talk in pairs about what they think the standard means. Lead a brief discussion about the standard.

💬 Student responses should include:

- The standard requires students to identify and examine a set of ideas or events.
- The standard requires students to explain how people, ideas, or events interact and change throughout the text.

Instruct students to focus on W.11-12.2.e and talk in pairs about how they think the standard applies to their writing. Lead a brief discussion about the standard. Ask students the following questions:

How does standard W.11-12.2.e compare to standard W.11-12.3.f? How do the standards differ?

💬 Student responses should include:

- Standard W.11-12.2.e requires students to use a formal style and objective tone while writing.
- Similarly, standard W.11-12.3.f requires students to adapt voice to the audience.

- Both standards require students to be aware of the audience and adjust tone/voice based on this awareness.
- Standard W.11-12.2.e focuses more on style and tone, whereas standard W.11-12.3.f focuses on voice.

① Students were introduced to W.11-12.3.f in 12.1.1 Lesson 2.

Instruct students to focus on L.11-12.4.a and talk in pairs about what they think the standard means. Lead a brief discussion about the standard.

💬 Student responses should include:

- The standard requires students to determine word meaning from context.
- The standard requires students to use the word's part of speech as a clue to its meaning.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read chapter 2 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and develop 2–3 discussion questions focused on how the structure of the text makes points clear, convincing, and engaging (RI.11-12.5). Prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.)

Instruct students to talk in pairs about questions they developed for homework, specifically analyzing how the structure is effective in engaging the reader and making points clear and convincing (RI.11-12.5).

💬 Student questions may include:

Why does Malcolm Little go “into hiding” (p. 25) after his first boxing match against Bill Peterson?

- 💬 He lost badly and a boxing ring was “the only place a Negro could whip a white man and not be lynched” (p. 25). The loss was a blow to Malcolm Little's reputation and the neighborhood looked down on him for such a bad loss.

What does Malcolm Little mean by saying that “even though they appeared to have opened the door, it was still closed” (p. 28)?

- 💬 Although the Swerlins treated him with respect and affection, they still did not think of him as a person. He was, in their eyes, “a pedigreed pup” (p. 28).
- ▶ Students discuss the questions that they have developed.

- ① If student discussion is rich, text-dependent, and building toward the assessment prompt, consider extending the discussions beyond the allotted time. Lead a brief whole-class discussion using any additional Reading and Discussion questions necessary to ensure students are prepared for the assessment. (Key questions are marked with an asterisk(*).)

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

40%

Instruct students to form pairs. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss.

Instruct student pairs to read pages 35–37 (from “The summer of 1940, in Lansing, I caught the Greyhound bus” to “But I found I couldn’t”).

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout the lesson:

What events happen in this chapter? How do they change Malcolm Little?

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

Provide students with the following definition: *feigned* means “made believe; pretended.”

- ① Students may be familiar with this word. Consider asking students to volunteer a definition before providing it to the group.

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

Post or project the following questions for students to discuss in pairs before sharing out with the class.

How does the description of Malcolm Little on page 35 demonstrate his character at the beginning of his journey to Boston?

- ☞ He has a cardboard suitcase and he’s wearing his “green suit” (p. 35). He states, “If someone had hung a sign, ‘HICK,’ around my neck, I couldn’t have looked much more obvious” (p. 35). This description shows that Malcolm is from a rural area and that he is aware he must have stood out given his attire.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following question to support their understanding.

What specific words and phrases does the author use to describe Malcolm Little and his actions on page 35?

💬 Student responses may include:

- He is wearing a “green suit” and has a “cardboard suitcase” (p. 35).
- He looks like a “‘HICK’” or country person (p. 35).
- He sits in the “back of the bus” which emphasizes the discrimination he faces (p. 35).
- He “gawked out of the window at white man’s America rolling past,” which shows he feels interested and separated from what he sees (pp. 35–36).

How might Malcolm Little look out the window at “white man’s America rolling past” (pp. 35–36)?

💬 He might look out with fear or interest at things he hasn’t seen before. Since he does not describe feelings of fear, he is likely looking with interest.

What, then, does *gawked* mean in this context?

💬 The word *gawked* means looking with interest or staring at something.

① Consider drawing students’ attention to their work with L.11-12.4.a as they use context clues to determine the meaning of a word.

Why could Malcolm Little not have “feigned indifference” to the society of Boston (p. 36)?

💬 The city environment of Boston is dramatically different from the environment of Lansing. Malcolm states, “I didn’t know the world contained as many Negroes as I saw thronging downtown Roxbury at night, especially on Saturdays. Neon lights, nightclubs, poolhalls, bars, the cars they drove!” (p. 36) Because all of these things are new and exciting, there is no way he could have pretended to not be interested in them.

Why does Malcolm X state that he “found [he] couldn’t” describe Boston (p. 37)?

💬 The world of Boston is too different from Lansing. All of the city sights and the culture, the “black-white couples strolling around arm in arm” (p. 36), awe him so much that he cannot communicate it. Malcolm was not prepared for how different the African-American community in Boston was and finds this contrast hard to communicate to his family back in Lansing.

***In pages 35–37, how does Malcolm X begin to draw distinctions between the African-American and white societies?**

💬 Student responses may include:

- The section starts with Malcolm X looking at “white man’s America” from “the back of the bus” (p. 35) as he travels to Boston, which emphasizes the control that white people have, both in America and over the African-American population.

- In Boston, Malcolm X talks about the “black society” (p. 36) of which Ella is a part and mentions that the Roseland State Ballroom performers play one night for a white audience and the next night for an African-American one.
- ① Students may not be familiar with the historical reference to segregated buses. If necessary to support student comprehension, inform students that until 1956 many bus lines required African-American passengers to enter through the back of the bus and give their seats up to white people if asked.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to form pairs and read pages 37–40 (from “My restlessness with Mason—and for the first time in my life” to “I’d probably still be a brainwashed black Christian”). Post or project the following questions for students to discuss.

Provide students with the following definitions: *pivotal* means “of vital or critical importance,” *profound* means “of deep meaning or of great and broadly inclusive significance,” and *menial* means “lowly and sometimes degrading.”

- ① Students may be familiar with these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.
- ▶ Students write the definitions of *pivotal*, *profound*, and *menial* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *carpentry* means “the skill or work of making or fixing wooden objects or wooden parts of buildings,” *arrangements* means “something that is done to prepare or plan for something in the future,” and *masses* means “a large number of people.”
- ▶ Students write the definitions of *carpentry*, *arrangements*, and *masses* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

***What changes come over Malcolm Little when he returns from Boston?**

💬 Student responses may include:

- Malcolm Little’s understanding of the white community in Lansing and his place in it has changed. He calls Mr. Ostrowski’s advice “in his nature as an American white man” (p. 37), and states that he sees only a future where Malcolm Little is in his place. Malcolm Little’s experience in Boston has made him long for a future in which he doesn’t have to “wash dishes” (p. 38).

- Malcolm Little is restless and troubled. He has “a restlessness with being around white people” (p. 37) for the first time in his life. The people around him notice as well, saying that Malcolm Little is “‘acting so strange’” and asking him, “‘[w]hat’s the matter?’” (p. 37).

***What does Malcolm X identify as the root of this change?**

- Malcolm experienced an entirely different type of African-American community in Boston, one that for him felt more natural. He states, “I know now that it was the sense of being a real part of a mass of my own kind, for the first time” (p. 37).

What does Malcolm X mean by saying that Mr. Ostrowski’s advice was “in his nature as an American white man” (p. 37)?

- Malcolm X states that Mr. Ostrowski’s advice was in his nature “as an American white man” (p. 37) because white culture didn’t accept the idea that an African-American student was capable of being lawyer. Mr. Ostrowski simply didn’t believe, as almost all white people didn’t at the time, that any African American could achieve a career of that sort. While his advice is deeply prejudiced, it wasn’t personally directed at Malcolm.

Why did Mr. Ostrowski’s advice “just [keep] treading around in [Malcolm X’s] mind” (p. 38)? What does *treading* mean in this context?

- Student responses may include:
 - Malcolm is smarter than most of the other students in his school and yet he was the only person who was not encouraged in his aspirations because he was African American. “The topmost scholastic standing” (p. 37) in the school shifts between Malcolm and two other students, but the other students “all reported that Mr. Ostrowski encouraged what they had wanted” (p. 38).
 - Malcolm states, “The more I thought afterwards about what he said” (p. 38) which implies that he cannot stop thinking about this advice. When taken in context of something happening in his “mind,” *treading* probably means walking or running around.

Why does Malcolm X characterize the interaction with Mr. Ostrowski as “the first major turning point of [his] life” (p. 39)?

- Student responses may include:
 - Mr. Ostrowski’s advice makes it clear to Malcolm that despite all of his hard work, his intelligence, and his popularity among his peers, Malcolm would not be allowed to overcome the racism within society. This realization is reinforced by the fact that as soon as Malcolm seems to not be “happy there anymore” (p. 39), he is moved into a foster home.

- Because of this conversation, he makes a conscious choice to change his life. He writes to Ella “almost every other day” and tells her he wants to “come there and live” in Boston (p. 39). He then states, “Whatever I have done since then, I have driven myself to become a success at it” (p. 40), indicating that he sees the move from Lansing as the first real choice he made for himself.

***How does Malcolm Little further change after his conversation with Mr. Ostrowski?**

💬 Student responses may include:

- He becomes even more withdrawn and resentful of his treatment: “It became a physical strain simply to sit in Mr. Ostrowski’s class” (p. 38).
- Malcolm Little begins to notice and react negatively to people’s use of the word “nigger” to describe him or other African Americans: “Where ‘nigger’ had slipped off my back before, wherever I heard it now, I stopped and looked at whoever said it” (p. 38).

① Remind students that the author uses the word “nigger” in the text. Students may use the author’s language when reading or citing textual evidence, but they should avoid using the word “nigger” in discussion when they are not quoting from the text as the term is a racial slur. Refer to the Module Overview for more information about how to address the word “nigger” in the classroom.

Why does Malcolm X state that going to live with Ella was the most “pivotal and profound” move in his life (p. 39)?

- 💬 If Malcolm had stayed in Mason he might have been “successful” by society’s standards for African Americans at the time. Malcolm states he might have gotten one “of the other menial jobs which, in those days, among Lansing Negroes, would have been considered ‘successful’” (p. 40). By saying that the change is “pivotal and profound” (p. 39), Malcolm implies that his life has since taken a much different course.

How does Malcolm X characterize what his life would have been like if Mr. Ostrowski had encouraged him to be a lawyer?

- 💬 Although it might have looked like a “successful” life, in Malcolm’s opinion he would have been just as subservient to the white community as he was in his childhood. Malcolm states that he might have had a life of luxury, “sipping cocktails” and pretending to be a “community spokesman” and “leader” (p. 40). In actuality, he would have been trying “to grab a few more crumbs from the groaning board of the two-faced whites” (p. 40).

Why might Malcolm X look negatively on this lifestyle?

- He states that he could have been a “brainwashed black Christian” (p. 40). The use of “brainwashed” suggests that he doesn’t think the “black Christian[s],” and by inference the “professional black bourgeoisie,” are thinking for themselves (p. 40).

What does this point of view indicate about how Malcolm X views himself?

- It indicates that he considers himself separate from the “brainwashed” African Americans and is not reliant on “two-faced whites” (p. 40) in order to live his life.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Analyzing Character Development**15%**

Explain to students that one of the key elements of narrative writing is the development of characters over the course of the text. Character development consists of the information that the author provides about the characters in the text. Character development includes the physical aspects of the character, their actions, their environment, and their words or thoughts.

It can be helpful to think of character development as tied to events that occur in a narrative story or essay; by examining the events of a text and the way in which the character acts and reacts, the reader can learn more about the character. Over the course of this chapter, Malcolm Little undergoes a number of changes. Instruct students to Think, Pair, Share about the following questions to show the relationship of Malcolm Little’s actions and reactions to events in his life.

What events happen to Malcolm Little over the course of the chapter?

- Student responses may include:
 - He loses two boxing matches against a white opponent.
 - He acts out in school and is sent to a reform school.
 - He goes to live with the Swerlins.
 - He is enrolled in Mason Junior High School.
 - Ella visits him.
 - He takes a trip to Boston.
 - Mr. Ostrowski advises him to find a “realistic” (p. 38) career.
 - He leaves the reform school and goes to live with the Lyons family.
 - He finishes eighth grade and moves to Boston to live with his sister, Ella.

Lead a brief class discussion of student responses. Post or project student responses. Instruct students to examine these events and answer the following question to determine how each event might demonstrate Malcolm Little's character development.

What changes occur in Malcolm Little's character over the course of the chapter?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Malcolm, ashamed of his loss, trains himself for a second boxing match.
- After being reprimanded by a teacher, Malcolm acts out against him, displaying a disdain for authority.
- Malcolm describes the Swerlins as good people but feels that their behavior is hypocritical: they don't think of him as a person.
- At Mason Junior High, Malcolm is treated as a "mascot" (p. 27) but he still involves himself in all of the activities.
- Ella is the "first really proud black woman" (p. 34) he has seen. He is impressed by her pride and power.
- In Boston, he is exposed to a broad African American community that was previously unknown to him. This exposure makes it impossible for him to be comfortable back at the Swerlins's.
- Malcolm realizes he can no longer be happy in Mason and leaves for Boston.

Explain to students that these events and changes give us an important window into Malcolm X's character. Students should consider how to use character development in their own writing to give the reader a larger understanding of who they are.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the Character Development Tool to record character development they have identified and discussed.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

How does Malcolm Little develop over the course of chapter 2?

Ask students to use this lesson's vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses. Remind students to establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while writing. 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.
- ① If necessary, remind students to use their notes from the previous lesson's homework to provide evidence and support their comprehension of Malcolm Little's development over the course of the chapter.

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. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate chapter 3 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and develop 2–3 discussion questions focused on how individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text (RI.11-12.3). Prepare possible answers to their questions for discussion.

- ▶ Students follow along.
- ① For Accountable Independent Writing homework, instruct students to continue planning their response to a Common Application prompt. Students can continue brainstorming or begin outlining their responses. Additionally, instruct students to read one model essay and write an objective summary of the essay. Model essays can be found at <http://www.jhu.edu/> (search term: Essays That Worked). Consider assigning students different model essays, so the class reads a wide variety. Also, consider establishing online protocols, so students can post their summaries to the class's online writing community. If necessary, read a model essay with the class and demonstrate writing a brief, objective summary.

Homework

Read and annotate chapter 3 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and develop 2–3 discussion questions focused on how individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text (RI.11-12.3). Prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.

Character Development Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Analyze the character development that you encounter in the text. Identify the events that are connected to this development. Cite textual evidence to support your work.

Character Development	Event	Evidence

Model Character Development Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Analyze the character development that you encounter in the text. Identify the events that are connected to this development. Cite textual evidence to support your work.

Character Development	Event	Evidence
Malcolm Little shows a disdain for authority.	Malcolm Little deliberately wears a hat to class and puts a tack on his teacher's chair.	"I came into a classroom with my hat on. I did it deliberately." (p. 25) "I passed behind his desk, snatched up a thumbtack and deposited it in his chair." (p. 26)
Malcolm Little develops an understanding of casual racism while living with the Swerlins.	The Swerlins talk negatively about African Americans in front of Malcolm Little, as if he was not there or could not understand their conversation.	"I suppose that in their own minds they meant no harm." (p. 27)
The things Malcolm Little sees while visiting Ella broaden his worldview.	Malcolm Little is exposed to a larger community of African Americans in Boston.	"I saw and met a hundred black people there whose big-city talk and ways left my mouth hanging open." (p. 36)
Malcolm Little becomes uncomfortable and unable to live in Mason as a "mascot" for white people.	Malcolm Little acts withdrawn from people in Mason and is no longer comfortable.	"I drew away from white people." (p. 38) "Nobody, including the teachers, could decide what had come over me." (p. 39)