

12.1.1

Lesson 11

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze chapter 10 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, pages 165–171 (from “‘The true knowledge’ reconstructed much more briefly than I received it” to “into which any religious faker could step and mislead our people”). In this chapter, Malcolm Little is placed in jail and rebels against his imprisonment. His family members visit and share with him information about a man named Elijah Muhammad, which changes his life. Students pay close attention to the structural choices the author makes in this section. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Analyze the effectiveness of the structure in chapter 10. How does the structure make the author’s points clear, convincing, and engaging?

For homework, students write a list of ideas about how they would respond to the following college interview question: What are your strengths and weaknesses? Also for homework, students respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: How does the author of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* use narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines to develop experiences, events, and/or characters in chapter 10? Additionally, students reread their personal narratives from 12.1.1 Lesson 6 and consider whether they would like to expand them into longer compositions or respond to a different Common Application prompt in 12.1.1 Lesson 12.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.11-12.5	Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.11-12.3.b	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
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., <i>The Federalist</i> , presidential addresses]”).
SL.11–12.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate. (See grades 11–12 Language standards 1 and 3 for specific expectations.)
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"> Analyze the effectiveness of the structure in chapter 10. How does the structure make the author’s points clear, convincing, and engaging?
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key aspects of the structure in chapter 10 (e.g., The author uses reflection and foreshadowing in this section.). Analyze how this structure makes the author’s points clear, convincing, and engaging (e.g., In this section, the author demonstrates how transformative the teachings of Mr. Muhammad, including the “true knowledge” (p. 165) and “Yacub’s History” (p. 167), were for Malcolm at this time of his life. He uses reflection to convey Malcolm’s thoughts at that time: “I have looked back, trying to assess, just for myself, my first reactions to all this” (p. 166), which makes his points clear and convincing to the reader. Malcolm X describes his sense of awe within this reflection: “It still was like a blinding light” (p. 167). He describes how, at the time, he was “smitten” (p. 166) like Paul in Damascus by the importance of this information. These descriptions engage and convince the reader of the power this new information had on Malcolm. However, at the end of this excerpt, the author uses foreshadowing to suggest that in the future Malcolm X will question these stories

when he learns that “Mr. Muhammad’s tales ... infuriated the Muslims of the East” (p. 171), which indicates that Mr. Muhammad’s version of Islam was not endorsed by those who were of the ancient practice. This foreshadowing is engaging because it gives the reader a reason to read on to the next chapter and find out why Malcolm X suggests that Mr. Muhammad may have been a “faker” (p. 171).).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> pillaged (v.) – robbed with open violence heathen (adj.) – irreligious, uncultured, or uncivilized smitten (adj.) – affected mentally or morally with a sudden pang Pharisees (n.) – a group of teachers among the Jewish people at the time of Jesus; he frequently rebukes them in the Gospels for their hypocrisy germs (n.) – the rudiment of a living organism; an embryo in its early stages eugenics (n.) – the study of hereditary improvement of the human race by controlled selective breeding
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> apprehensive (adj.) – uneasy or fearful about something that might happen
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> traffic (n.) – the buying and selling of illegal goods or services especially between countries numb (adj.) – unable to think, feel, or react normally because of something that shocks or upsets you dormant (adj.) – not doing anything at this time: not active but able to become active

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RI.11-12.5, W.11-12.3.b, W.11-12.9.b, SL.11-12.6, L.11-12.4.a Text: <i>The Autobiography of Malcolm X</i> as told to Alex Haley, Chapter 10, pages 165–171 	

Learning Sequence:	
1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda	1. 10%
2. Homework Accountability	2. 15%
3. Reading and Discussion	3. 50%
4. Quick Write	4. 15%
5. Closing	5. 10%

Materials

- Student copies of the 12.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool (refer to 12.1.1 Lesson 1) (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.
❗	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

10%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.11-12.5. In this lesson, students continue to read *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, chapter 10, paying particular attention to the structural choices the author uses. Students then analyze the effectiveness of the structure in chapter 10 and determine how the structure makes the author's points clear, convincing, and engaging.

- Students look at the agenda.

❗ **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 standard W.11-12.3.b. Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they think standard W.11-12.3.b applies to their writing. Lead a brief discussion about this standard.

🗨 Student responses may include:

- The standard asks students to use different approaches to describe characters and explain experiences or events in a narrative.
- The standard asks students to use approaches or techniques such as such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines.

Ask students to Think, Pair, Share about the following question:

How could some of the techniques listed in this standard develop an experience, character, or event?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- An author uses dialogue to develop a character or event by demonstrating what the people in the story actually said.
- An author uses pacing in the narrative to create suspense or a sense of time passing quickly or slowly.
- An author uses description to make the characters or events seem more real and clear in the reader's mind.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Depending on students' familiarity with the terms in this standard, consider providing the following definitions:

- *Pacing*: how the author handles the passage of time in a narrative, moving through events either more quickly or slowly to serve the purpose of the text
- *Dialogue*: refers to the lines spoken by characters in drama or fiction; conversation between two or more characters
- *Description*: details about a person, place, or thing in order to create an image in the reader's mind
- *Reflection*: refers to consideration of a subject, idea, or past event
- *Multiple plot lines*: refers to the different plots of a literary text

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Inform students that they consider the use of the techniques outlined in this standard in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* for homework as well as exploring the standard more deeply in the next lesson.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read and annotate chapter 10 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 the discussion questions they developed for homework, specifically analyzing the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging (RI.11-12.5).

- ① If necessary, remind students that *exposition* means “writing primarily intended to convey information or to explain.”

💬 Student questions may include:

On page 158, Reginald says, “I’ll show you how to get out of prison.” How does this sentence relate to the rest of the chapter?

- 💬 Malcolm immediately thinks of escaping from prison: “My automatic response was to think he had come upon some way I could work a hype on the penal authorities” (p. 158). The reader may think Malcolm may escape prison as well. However, it becomes clear to both the reader and Malcolm that the “prison” is metaphorical and related to the oppression of African Americans in white society, and getting out of prison for Malcolm means accepting “the true knowledge” (p. 165).

How does the author structure the text to convince the reader that “[t]he white man is the devil” (p. 162)?

- 💬 The author reflects upon all the relationships with white people that Malcolm has had, including “the state white people ... the white judge ... the Swerlins” (p. 162), Mr. Oskowski, and even people he considered close to him, such as Sophia and Hymie (pp. 162–163). He artificially connects them all using ellipses. These are characters with whom the reader is familiar, so the ellipses allow the reader to judge the “devilishness” of each character and come to a conclusion.
- ① Malcolm X uses his brother Reginald’s statement “[t]he white man is the devil” (p. 162) to explain the systemic oppression he has encountered throughout his life. Although this statement initially may be read as incendiary, this claim evolves and becomes more nuanced throughout the text as Malcolm X and his views change.
- ① If student discussion is rich, text-dependent, and building toward the assessment prompt, consider extending the discussions beyond the allotted time. Then 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

50%

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 165–166 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (from “‘The true knowledge,’ reconstructed much more briefly than I received it” to “liken myself to Paul. But I do understand his experience”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class. Remind students to annotate their texts for structural choices using the code SC. Remind students that annotating helps them to keep track of evidence they will use later in lesson assessments and the Mid-Unit Assessment, which focus on the effectiveness of structural choices.

- ① This focused annotation supports students’ engagement with W.11-12.9.b, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.
- 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 definitions: *pillaged* means “robbed with open violence,” *heathen* means “irreligious, uncultured, or uncivilized,” *smitten* means “affected mentally or morally with a sudden pang,” and *Pharisees* are “a group of teachers among the Jewish people at the time of Jesus; he frequently rebukes them in the Gospels for their hypocrisy.”

- ① Students may be familiar with these words. Consider asking students to volunteer the definitions before providing them to the class.
 - ▶ Students write the definition of *pillaged*, *heathen*, *smitten*, and *Pharisees* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *traffic* means “the buying and selling of illegal goods or services especially between countries” and *numb* means “unable to think, feel, or react normally because of something that shocks or upsets you.”
 - ▶ Students write the definitions of *traffic* and *numb* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

How does the way the author organizes the stories in this section make the author’s ideas clear and interesting?

***What is the effect of how the author presents the “true knowledge” that Malcolm X’s family shared with him?**

💬 Student responses may include:

- The author begins this information by contrasting the “the true knowledge” to the history in “white man’s history books” (p. 165). This contrast indicates that the omission of “the true knowledge” is an injustice and gives more weight or importance to the information he is about to share.
- The structure of the retelling of the “true knowledge” includes an immediate comparison of non-white peoples, who “built great empires and cultures,” and the white race “living on all fours in caves” (p. 165). Then the “devil white man” (p. 165) destroys those established civilizations through violent means. Opening the story with this comparison clearly sets up the non-white peoples as good and the white people as evil and unnatural, making the message clear to the reader.
- Although the story begins by telling about the “great empires and cultures” of a civilization, it goes on to provide a brief history of the relatively recent slave trade, “[h]uman history’s greatest crime” (p. 165). This story is striking because “[i]n one generation,” a culture was brought to its knees and “brainwashed” (p. 165). The reader may have thought that this story was going to be about ancient civilizations, but this shift is surprising and engaging, and makes the central ideas about racial identity and systemic oppression very clear.

***How does the author structure Malcolm Little’s reaction to the “true knowledge”? What does this structure imply about what Malcolm Little heard?**

💬 Student responses may include:

- This reflection shows how powerful the impact of learning the “true knowledge” was on Malcolm. The story itself was important to retell, even if it is “reconstructed here much more briefly than [he] received it” (p. 165). The author intends for the story to have a similar impact on the reader, and if it does not, the reflection illustrates why he believes it should.
- The author writes, “Many a time, I have looked back, trying to assess, just for myself, my first reactions” (p. 166). Malcolm did not know what to make of the information: “every hustling fox and criminal wolf instinct in me ... struck numb” (p. 166). He states he was “smitten” (p. 166) like Paul was in Damascus, and that the information was “like a blinding light” (p. 167). This comparison suggests that Malcolm was struggling with his own identity within the context of the story: he, too, was “brainwashed” (p. 166) and he, too, “had absolutely no knowledge of his true identity” (p. 165).

① Consider explaining to students that *reflection* is a narrative technique that may be used to structure the order of a text.

How does this story of the “true knowledge” support points the author has already made within the text?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Slaves were “cut ... off from all knowledge of their own kind” until they were unaware of their “true identity” (p. 165). Therefore, African Americans are denied access to their own history, and are forced to accept a “whitened” version (p. 165). This story relates to what Reginald says to Malcolm, ““You don’t even know who you are”” (p. 164). It also relates to the idea of the “brainwashed black Christian” (p. 40) that Malcolm X believes he would be if he had never learned about the ““true knowledge”” and Islam.
- One of Malcolm X’s points is that society is unfair toward African Americans, as he indicated in the descriptions of how his mother was treated, how Mr. Ostrowski treated him, and how he was unfairly sentenced. This ““true knowledge”” explains how the limited prospects for African Americans were perpetuated and the “great empires” (p. 165) were erased from history.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to read pages 166–167 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (from “Many a time, I have looked back, trying to assess” to “to accept that which is already within you, and around you”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Why were the inmates concerned and the guards “apprehensive” (p. 167) about Malcolm Little? What does *apprehensive* mean in this context?

💬 Student responses may include:

- The inmates were concerned and the guards were nervous about approaching Malcolm because he was acting so unusually. He would “sit in [his] room and stare” (p. 167), and he refused to eat. Even the prison psychiatrist may have thought it was “some act” (p. 167).
- The guards were nervous or careful to approach Malcolm because they did not know what he would do. The guards may have thought that Malcolm was up to something dangerous, as he had proven to be difficult and unpredictable, “cursing guards, throwing things out of [his] cell, balking in lines” (p. 156) and demonstrating other disruptive behaviors.

💬 Student responses should include:

- The word *apprehensive* means nervous or careful.

- ① Consider drawing students' attention to their application of standard L.11-12.4.a through the process of determining the meaning of words through contexts.

***How does the structure of the text in this excerpt relate to Malcolm X's statement that "only guilt admitted accepts truth" (p. 167)?**

- 💬 The statement helps Malcolm and the reader connect the information in the "'true knowledge'" to his life that came before. He states that it was as if "all of that life merely was back there, without any remaining effect, or influence" (p. 166), a powerful statement from someone who hustled for so many years and chose to "live by [his] wits" (p. 111).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to read pages 167–169 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (from "I learned later that my brothers and sisters in Detroit" to "returned to the mainland, among the natural black people") and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *germs* means "rudiments of a living organism; embryos in their early stages" and *eugenics* means "The study of hereditary improvement of the human race by controlled selective breeding."

- ① Students may be familiar with these words. Consider asking students to volunteer the definitions before providing them to the class.
- ▶ Students write the definitions of *germs* and *eugenics* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definition: *dormant* means "not doing anything at this time; not active but able to become active."
- ▶ Students write the definition of *dormant* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

***What does the order of how the "'true knowledge'" and "Yacub's History" are presented in the text indicate about Malcolm X's transformation?**

- 💬 Student responses may include:
- The "'true knowledge'" sets the tone for "Yacub's History." The "'true knowledge'" includes information about slavery that had been removed from "the white man's history books" (p. 165) and not made available to African Americans. Because known history had been removed from history books, it is more believable that unknown history—that of Yacub—could also have been removed.

- The “true knowledge” explains how Malcolm may have unconsciously believed in the idea that “white was good, to be admired, respected, and loved” (p. 166), and it explains why he got a conk and a white girlfriend. The “true knowledge” was “like a blinding light” (p. 167) and helped Malcolm stop being brainwashed. Likewise, “Yacub’s History” is Malcolm’s first introduction to Mr. Elijah Muhammad’s teachings, and presents a different possible identity: one of the “Lost-Found Nation of Islam” (p. 171).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to read pages 169–171 from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* (from “Mr. Elijah Muhammad teaches his followers that within six months’ time” to “any religious faker could step and mislead our people”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Note all the instances of the phrase “Mr. Elijah Muhammad teaches” on pages 169–170. What does this repetition suggest about Malcolm X’s relationship to Mr. Muhammad?

☛ Student responses may include:

- The repetition of this phrase suggests that Malcolm X is aware that the story he is retelling is not his own and wants to give credit to Mr. Muhammad.
- Malcolm X repeats this phrase several times, suggesting that he may want to distance himself from these ideas. In the last paragraph, Malcolm X refers to “a religious faker” (p. 171), which is likely a reference to Elijah Muhammad, who had “infuriated the Muslims of the East” (p. 171) with these stories. The repetition may be Malcolm X’s attempt to separate himself from this “religious faker” (p. 171).

***What is the impact of how the author ends the chapter?**

☛ Student responses may include:

- The last line, which refers to a “religious faker” who could “step in and mislead our people,” undermines the power of “Yacub’s History” because it suggests that the “religious faker” may be Mr. Muhammad (p. 171).
- What Malcolm X previously and respectfully called Mr. Muhammad’s teachings, he now calls “tales” (p. 171). This change is provocative and engaging to the reader because it suggests that there is later conflict between Malcolm X and Mr. Muhammad.
- The last paragraph separates “real Islam” from Mr. Muhammad’s version, indicating that Malcolm X no longer follows Mr. Muhammad and follows Islam “of the East” (p. 171).
- This paragraph foreshadows a change in Malcolm X’s character, suggesting that he will seek deeper meaning about these teachings and seek greater spiritual enlightenment “at Mecca”

(p. 171). It also indicates that he will become an important ambassador of Islam in the West, as he freely explains to Eastern Muslims that “they themselves hadn’t done enough to make real Islam known in the West” (p. 171).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Quick Write

15%

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

Analyze the effectiveness of the structure in chapter 10. How does the structure make the author’s points clear, convincing, and engaging?

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 5: Closing

10%

Remind students that for the Performance Assessment at the end of the module they will practice a college interview.

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

Post or project standard SL.11-12.6. Instruct students to 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 speak in different environments and for different reasons.
 - The standard requires students to show that they can speak with standard, formal English.

Ask students to review their statements of purpose for their college interviews and then to Think, Pair, Share about the following questions:

What is the difference between formal and informal English?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Formal English is spoken or written language that obeys all the rules of standard English grammar and spelling; informal English may break these rules.
- Formal English does not include contractions or slang; informal English may include contractions or slang.

In what settings is formal English appropriate? In what settings is informal English appropriate?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Formal English is appropriate for school, work, and official interactions.
- Informal English is appropriate for peer, family, and casual interactions.

What type of English is most appropriate for a college interview? Why?

💬 Formal English is most appropriate for a college interview because it is a school or work interaction. Also, one purpose of a college interview is to impress the interviewer with the applicant's speaking skills, so formal English would best achieve that purpose.

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion of student responses. Explain to students that while they should practice formal English for their college interviews, they should also practice being friendly and confident.

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to write a list of ideas about how they would respond to the following college interview question. Remind students to keep in mind their task, purpose, and audience as they consider their response. Inform students that they will practice responding to this interview question in the following lesson.

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Also for homework, instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How does the author of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines to develop experiences, events, and/or characters in chapter 10?

Also for homework, instruct students to reread their personal narratives from 12.1.1 Lesson 6 and consider whether they would like to expand them into longer compositions or try a different Common Application prompt in 12.1.1 Lesson 12.

① Students who have been completing their Accountable Independent Writing each night should gather their drafts to bring to class for their work in the following lesson.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Write a list of ideas about how you would respond to the following college interview question. Remember to keep in mind your task, purpose, and audience as they consider your response. You will practice responding to this interview question in the following lesson.

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

Also, respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How does the author of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines to develop experiences, events, and/or characters in chapter 10?

Additionally, reread your personal narrative from 12.1.1 Lesson 6 and consider whether you would like to expand it into a longer composition or whether you would like to try a different Common Application prompt in 12.1.1 Lesson 12.