

12.1.1

Lesson 24

Introduction

In this lesson, students draft or revise a response to a Common Application essay prompt, practicing standard W.11-12.3.d as they integrate precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences or setting presented in their essay. Student learning is assessed via students' drafts. The drafts will be reviewed in relation to standard W.11-12.3.d.

For homework, students read chapter 18 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and develop 2–3 discussion questions focused on how central ideas develop, interact, or build on one another in the text.

Standards

Assessed Standard	
W.11-12.3.d	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.11-12.3.f	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. f. Adapt voice, awareness of audience, and use of language to accommodate a variety of cultural contexts.
W.11-12.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

Assessment

Assessment(s)
Student learning is assessed via a response to the following prompt:

- Draft a paragraph in response to a Common Application essay prompt, focusing on using precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

 This assessment will be evaluated using the 12.1 Narrative Writing Rubric.

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Revise and expand upon the response to the narrative prompt in 12.1.1 Lesson 18 or begin a new draft to a different Common Application prompt, including precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters (e.g., “Pairs of slim metallic gold Air Max, orange filigree embossed Foamposites, and a rare tie-dyed mash up of fabrics branded as ‘What the Dunk’ all made their way into my collection” and “A shared passion for shoes creates an instant connection with people I meet, whether in a suburban shopping mall, or a trendy neon-lit Los Angeles sneaker store.”).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- None.*

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

- None.*

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

- None.*

*Because this is not a close reading lesson, there is no specified vocabulary. However, in the process of returning to the text, students may uncover unfamiliar words. Teachers can guide students to make meaning of these words by following the protocols described in 1e of this document http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/9-12_ela_prefatory_material.pdf.

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: W.11-12.3.d, W.11-12.3.f, W.11-12.5 Text: <i>The Autobiography of Malcolm X</i> as told to Alex Haley, Chapters 1–17 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Writing Instruction: Precise Words and Sensory Language Drafting Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 20% 20% 50% 5%

Materials

- Student copies of their personal narratives from 12.1.1 Lesson 18
- Student copies of the 12.1 Narrative Writing Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.1.1 Lesson 2)

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 the assessed standard for this lesson: W.11-12.3.d. In this lesson, students continue to develop their narrative writing skills, focusing on using precise and vivid words and phrases. This work supports W.11-12.5, which asks students to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

- ▶ Students look at agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

20%

Instruct students take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (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 you consider your response. Also, provide reasons for your opinion. What is your favorite book?)

Instruct students to form pairs to ask and answer the college interview question. For this practice session, students should focus on giving reasons to support their opinions.

- ▶ Students practice asking and answering the college interview question.

- ① Instruct students to keep their interview preparation notes in a writing journal or folder as a portfolio of their interview preparation throughout the module.

Instruct students to take out their responses to the second homework assignment. (Respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: How does the author of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters?)

Instruct student pairs to discuss their responses.

- 💬 Student responses may include:

- The author writes that “there was an instant avalanche of public reaction” (p. 242) which creates a vivid picture of how large and immediate the public reaction was.
- The author describes how “black people had been grinning and begging and ‘Yessa, Massa’ and Uncle Tomming” (p. 243) to illustrate his point about how white people expect African Americans to behave.
- The writes how “the telephone ... nearly jumped off the wall” (p. 244); the image of the telephone nearly jumping “off the wall” conveys how eager everyone was to speak with Malcolm X.

Instruct students to talk in pairs about the third homework assignment. (Reread your personal narrative from 12.1.1 Lesson 18 and consider if you would like to expand it into a longer composition or try a different prompt in 12.1.1 Lesson 24.) Instruct students to review their statements of purpose from 12.1.1 Lesson 18 and consider which Common Application prompt will allow them to best achieve their purposes.

- ▶ Students discuss their decisions regarding the Common Application essay.

① Common Application prompts were introduced in 12.1.1 Lesson 2.

Activity 3: Writing Instruction: Precise Words and Sensory Language

20%

Explain that in this activity, students draft a response to a Common Application essay prompt, focusing on integrating precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

Ask students to form pairs to discuss the following question:

How have vivid pictures of experiences, events, setting, and/or character contributed to your experience reading *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Vivid pictures help the reader to create a mental image of a setting (“The telephone in our then small Temple Seven restaurant nearly jumped off the wall” (p. 244)). This picture conveys the energy of Temple Seven at this time.
- Vivid pictures help to show how a character feels: “I talked with my own wife, and with other people, and actually I was only mouthing words that really meant nothing to me” (p. 311). The reader can picture Malcolm X “mouthing” the words without really paying attention to what he is saying, which conveys the detached emotional state the character is in.
- Vivid pictures help to illustrate an observation the author makes about a character: “The drape and the cut of a zoot suit showed to the best advantage if you were tall—and I was over six feet. My conk was fire-red. I was really a clown, but my ignorance made me think I was sharp” (p. 81). In this example, the author paints a vivid picture of Malcolm X before making an observation that he was “really a clown.” The vivid description helps the reader to see what Malcolm X means when he states that he was “really a clown.”

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Inform students that to use “precise words and phrases” means to use specific language that most accurately describes experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. Provide students with the following sets of examples:

- 1) This was the worst thing that ever had happened to me. 2) “I felt as though something in *nature* had failed, like the sun, or the stars” (p. 311).
- 1) It made me feel terrible to realize I had been betrayed. 2) “My head felt like it was bleeding inside” (p. 309).
- 1) There were a lot of people in the bar but it wasn’t very loud. 2) “But with all these Harlemites drinking and talking, there was just a low murmur of sound” (p. 76).

How does the use of precise words and phrases in the second examples in each of the above sets convey experiences, characters, or settings more effectively than the first examples in each set?

🗨 Student responses should include:

- In the first example, the writing is vague and imprecise. In the second example, by describing the experience as if “something in *nature*” had failed and then being even more specific by writing that it was as if “sun, or the stars” had failed, the author conveys how bad and unexpected the experience was, since the sun and stars are aspects of nature that people rely on to always be there.
- In the first example, the author writes that he felt “terrible,” which is not very descriptive. In the second example, the author describes the feeling using precise sensory details. When he writes that it felt like his head “was bleeding inside” the reader has a precise sense of the pain he is feeling.
- The first example conveys the basic facts of the situation, that there were a “lot of people” but it “was not very loud.” The second example describes the action of the people “drinking and talking” and uses the precise word “murmur” to describe the sound. The second example is a more effective way of conveying what the scene looked and sounded like.

Inform students that in addition to being precise, it is important to provide “telling details” that are descriptive or revealing, in order to engage the reader. Provide students with the following example:

- “The telephone in our then small Temple Seven restaurant nearly jumped off the wall. I had a receiver against my ear five hours a day. I was listening, and jotting in my notebook, as press, radio and television people called, all of them wanting the Muslim reaction to the quoted attacks of these black ‘leaders’” (p. 244).

What effect do the details in this example have on the reader?

🗨️ Student responses may include:

- The details of the phone that “nearly jumped” off the wall helps to convey how busy and urgent the scene is. By using the descriptive language of a phone “jump[ing]” the author brings objects in the scene to life.
- The details about Malcolm X having the “receiver against [his] ear five hours a day” allow the reader to picture how busy and engaged Malcolm X is in response to all the people calling. These details show the reader why the telephone is jumping “off the wall.” The author explains that the “press, radio, and television people” (p. 244) are calling to get the “Muslim reaction to the quoted attacks” of the “black ‘leaders’” (p. 244). These “telling details” explain the descriptive language of the scene.

Finally, inform students that “sensory language” engages the reader even further. Remind students that sensory language is language that appeals to the senses. Provide students with the following example:

- “The voices questioning me became to me as breathing, living devils. And I tried to pour on pure fire in return” (p. 245).

Ask students:

What effect do the sensory details in this example have on the reader?

🗨️ Student responses may include:

- The sensory details of “breathing, living devils” conveys how Malcolm X feels attacked by the people phoning him. This sensory detail is vivid, so the reader can hear the “breathing” on the other end of the phone.
- The sensory details help to establish what Malcolm X means by stating, “I tried to pour on pure fire” (p. 245). The “breathing” of the devils suggests fire and anger, so the reader understands what Malcolm X means by “pure fire” in return. He speaks with as much passion and anger as the “devils” (p. 245).
- “Breathing, living devils” and “pure fire” both suggest heat and flames, which convey the intensity of the situation and how intense the conversations between Malcolm X and the press have become.

Finally, explain to students that precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language all contribute to a cohesive narrative.

- ① Remind students that they should provide the same level of information and vivid detail in their personal narratives to develop their experiences or events. However, the scope of their personal narratives may focus on a much shorter amount of time and the events may be less intense than Malcolm X’s experiences.

Explain to students that it is helpful to keep in mind the task, purpose, and audience when deciding how to use precise and sensory language. Instruct students to take out their statements of purpose from 12.1.1 Lesson 2 and consider whether they would like to revise their statements of purpose based on work they have done over the past several days. Instruct students to form pairs to discuss following questions:

How does your task inform the use of precise and sensory language in your essay?

💬 Student responses may include:

- Precise and sensory language and vivid images and details help the writer convey his or her unique personal experience more clearly.
- This essay is short (650 words), so the use of precise language is important in order to have the maximum effect within the word limit.

How does your purpose inform the use of precise and sensory language in your essay?

💬 Student responses may include:

- One of my purposes is to make myself stand out for the college admissions board. Using precise and sensory language can help me convey my unique experience, and make me more interesting, memorable, and attractive to the college admissions board.
- I want to demonstrate my writing ability in the personal essay. Using precise and sensory language shows that I understand that this kind of language is effective.

How does your audience inform the use of precise and sensory language in your essay?

💬 Student responses may include:

- The audience is a group of people who are reading my writing for the first time. Therefore, it is important that I use precise and sensory language to convey my experiences clearly.
- By using precise language, I can ensure that the college's admissions board accurately understands my personal experience.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Remind students to be mindful of their task, purpose, and audience as they use precise and sensory language.

Activity 4: Drafting

50%

Instruct students to use precise words and sensory language like those they analyzed in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* to continue drafting their responses to one of the Common Application

prompts. Students may expand on the personal narrative they wrote in 12.1.1 Lesson 18 or choose a new prompt.

Instruct students to work individually to respond to the following prompt:

Draft a paragraph in response to a Common Application essay prompt, focusing on using precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

Remind students to use the 12.1 Narrative Writing Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

- ▶ Students listen and read the writing prompt.
- ① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.
- ① Consider drawing students' attention to their work with W.11-12.3.f as they adapt voice and language use to reflect an awareness of audience.

Transition to the independent writing.

- 🗣 See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.
- ① Instruct students to keep their personal narratives in a writing journal or folder as a portfolio of their narrative writing throughout the module.

Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate chapter 18 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and develop 2–3 discussion questions focused on how central ideas develop, interact, or build on one another in the text (RI.11-12.2). Instruct students to prepare possible answers to their questions for discussion. Students may also use the code WT to annotate for writing techniques that they identify in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* that they would like to use in their own writing.

- ▶ Students follow along.
- ① For Accountable Independent Writing homework, instruct students to continue drafting their personal narratives. Students may continue the draft they worked on during this lesson or choose to respond to a new Common Application prompt. Remind students to focus on using precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters. Instruct students to practice combining sentences in their drafts as well.

Homework

Read and annotate chapter 18 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and develop 2–3 discussion questions focused on how central ideas develop, interact, or build on one another in the text (RI.11-12.2). Prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.