

12.1.2

Lesson 5

Introduction

In this lesson, students conclude their reading of “Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit.” Students read paragraphs 25–32 (from “The old stories demonstrate the interrelationships that the Pueblo people have maintained” to “Yellow Woman and all women are beautiful”), in which Silko discusses Kochininako, Yellow Woman, and how her beauty and courage saved her people in the old-time stories. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Analyze how Silko uses and refines the meaning of the term *beauty* over the course of the text.

For homework, students respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: Analyze how Silko provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative. In addition, students look over their notes and annotations in preparation for the End-of-Unit Assessment.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.11-12.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines <i>faction</i> in <i>Federalist</i> No. 10).
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.11-12.3.e	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
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]”).
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 how Silko uses and refines the meaning of the term <i>beauty</i> over the course of the text.
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify how Silko defines beauty in this excerpt (e.g., Silko writes, “the old-time people were not so much thinking about physical appearances. In each story, the beauty that Yellow Woman possesses is the beauty of her passion, her daring, and her sheer strength to act when catastrophe is imminent” (par. 26).). Discuss how the meaning of this term is used, refined, and reinforced throughout the essay (e.g., This definition of beauty, as well as its portrayal in <i>Yellow Woman</i>, finally explains the title of the essay. It also reinforces what Silko asserts earlier in the text, when she writes, “Beauty was as much a feeling of harmony as it was a visual, aural, or sensual effect” (par. 13). In other words, beauty is not limited to physical beauty; it also includes inner beauty. Silko relates this definition of internal beauty to herself, and claims that it helped her “[learn] to be comfortable with [her] differences” (par. 30), which were largely physical.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> cosmology (n.) – a particular account of the origin or structure of the universe uninhibited (adj.) – not restrained by social convention or usage; unconstrained

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

- spectrum (n.) – complete range of things
- sensuality (n.) – the enjoyment, expression, or pursuit of physical, esp. sexual, pleasure

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

- deeds (n. pl.) – something that is done; an act or action
- courage (n.) – the ability to do something that you know is difficult or dangerous
- famine (n.) – a situation in which many people do not have enough food to eat
- drought (n.) – a long period of time during which there is very little or no rain

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RI.11-12.4, W.11-12.3.e, W.11-12.9.b, L.11-12.4.a • Text: “Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit” by Leslie Marmon Silko, paragraphs 25–32 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Reading and Discussion 4. Quick Write 5. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 20% 3. 55% 4. 15% 5. 5%

Materials

- 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

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.11-12.4. Inform students that in this lesson, they read the end of “Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit,” paragraphs 25–32, and focus on how Silko uses and refines the term beauty over the course of the text.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

20%

Instruct students to 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. To respond to the interview question, you should conduct brief online searches for information about a college that interests you. What can you contribute to our college campus?)

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

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

📘 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: Analyze how Silko uses 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 talk in pairs about their responses to the prompt.

💬 Student responses may include:

- Silko writes, “But I did not see any signs of that strain or anxiety in the face of my beloved Grandma A’mooh” (par. 2). Hearing that there are no “signs of that strain or anxiety in the

- face” helps to create a vivid picture of a child looking at her “beloved Grandma A’mooh” (par. 2).
- Silko writes, “They handled the ladders with great ease, and while two women ground the adobe mud on stones and added straw, another woman loaded the hod with mud and passed it up to the two women on ladders, who were smoothing the plaster on the wall with their hands” (par. 13). Here, we can see that the memory is “vivid,” as Silko states, because she remembers even the smallest details and conveys them in precise words and phrases, such as the “stones” and “straw,” and how the “two women ... smooth[ed] the plaster on the wall with their hands” (par. 13).

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

55%

Instruct students to form pairs and review the entire text, identifying and annotating Silko’s references to *beauty* throughout the text. Remind students that annotating helps them keep track of evidence they use later in this lesson assessment, which focuses on the use and refinement of a term.

- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard W.11-12.9.b through the process of drawing evidence from the text to support reflection and analysis.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students throughout the lesson:

What does Silko write about beauty?

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

Lead a brief whole-class discussion about the ways Silko defines *beauty* and the examples she uses to support her definition.

Post or project the following questions for students to discuss. Remind students to continue to annotate their texts as they read.

Instruct students to read paragraphs 25–32 (from “The old stories demonstrate the interrelationships” to “Yellow Woman and all women are beautiful”).

Provide students with the following definitions: *cosmology* means “a particular account of the origin or structure of the universe” and *uninhibited* means “not restrained by social convention or usage; unconstrained.”

- ① Students may be familiar with these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the class.
- ▶ Students write the definitions of *cosmology* and *uninhibited* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing the following definitions for students: *deeds* means “something that is done; an act or action,” *courage* means “the ability to do something that you know is difficult or dangerous,” *famine* means “a situation in which many people do not have enough food to eat,” and *drought* means “a long period of time during which there is very little or no rain.”
- ▶ Students write the definition of *deeds*, *courage*, *famine*, and *drought* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What does the fact that “women appear as often as men in the old stories as hero figures” suggest about Pueblo culture (par. 25)?

- 💬 It is important that “women appear as often as men ... as hero figures” because in the old stories, “the status of women is equal with the status of men” (par. 25). Their equality in the stories represents their equality in reality.

In what way do Yellow Woman’s deeds “span the spectrum of human behavior” (par. 25)? What is the meaning of *spectrum* in this context?

- 💬 Yellow Woman’s deeds are “mostly heroic acts,” but in one story, “she chooses to join the secret Destroyer Clan,” which is not heroic (par. 25); it is destructive and irresponsible. Because these two things are so different, and because “span” means to extend across, *spectrum* means the entire range of something.
- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.11-12.4.a through the process of using context to make meaning of a word.

Why do the old-time stories “celebrate” “uninhibited sexuality” (par. 25)?

- 💬 The old-time stories celebrate Yellow Woman’s “courage” and her “uninhibited sexuality” because “fertility was so highly valued” (par. 25). Sexual freedom and fertility are important to the Pueblo people because they believe that “[n]ew life [is] so precious” (par. 20).

How is Yellow Woman “beautiful” (par. 26)? How does the example of Yellow Woman refine what Silko means by beauty?

- ☞ According to Silko, “the old-time people” considered Yellow Woman beautiful, but they “were not so much thinking about physical appearances” (par. 26). Instead, they were thinking of “the beauty of her passion, her daring, and her sheer strength to act when catastrophe is imminent” (par. 26). In this way, Yellow Woman is beautiful because of her spirit, not her physical appearance. By telling this story, Silko further refines the meaning of *beauty* by emphasizing once again that beauty, for the Pueblo people, is an inner beauty, not an external appearance.

In the story Silko recounts in paragraph 27, how does beauty influence Yellow Woman? What is the outcome of her actions?

- ☞ Student responses should include:
- In this story, Yellow Woman’s people are suffering from “drought and accompanying famine,” so she is out to “find fresh water for her husband and children” when she encounters “a strong, sexy man in buffalo-skin leggings” (par. 27).
 - She is taken by his physical beauty, and when she acts on this attraction, it ultimately saves her people because the Buffalo People “agree to give their bodies to the hunters to feed the starving Pueblo” (par. 27).

How does the story of Yellow Woman and Buffalo Man exemplify Yellow Woman’s beauty?

- ☞ Yellow Woman is taken by Buffalo Man and “falls in love with [him]” (par. 27) even though she has a husband. The relationship she has with him helps her provide meat for her family and the “starving Pueblo” (par. 27). This example shows that sensuality is also an important part of her internal beauty: “the beauty of [Yellow Woman’s] passion, her daring” can save people when “catastrophe is imminent” (par. 26).

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

How does Yellow Woman’s “fearless sensuality result[] in the salvation of the people of her village” (par. 27)?

- ☞ Yellow Woman’s “fearless sensuality” is the reason she unites with Buffalo Man, which in turn leads to the “Buffalo People agree[ing] to give their bodies to the hunters to feed the starving Pueblo” (par. 27). Had she not been fearlessly sensual, the Pueblo would have starved.

What is the meaning of *sensuality* in this context?

- ☞ Because Silko is referring to Yellow Woman’s union with Buffalo Man, *sensuality* means the pursuit of sexual pleasure.

- ① Consider drawing students' attention to their application of standard L.11-12.4.a through the process of using context and word parts to make meaning of a word.

How does the story of Yellow Woman's "fling" with "Whirlwind Man" relate to the story of her interaction with "Buffalo Man" (par. 27–29)?

- 💬 In both these stories, Yellow Woman's "vibrant sexuality benefits her people" (par. 29). Her relationship with Buffalo Man allows her to provide food for her starving people. Similarly, her relationship with Whirlwind Man produces twin boys who become "great heroes of the people" (par. 29).

How does Silko relate Yellow Woman's adventures to her own story (par. 30)?

- 💬 Silko writes that "sometimes an individual must act despite disapproval, or concern for appearances or what others may say" (par. 30). The stories of Yellow Woman helped Silko become comfortable with herself and her own strength and beauty.

How does Yellow Woman's beauty relate to the beauty of "all women" (par. 32)?

- 💬 Yellow Woman "is beautiful because she has the courage to act in times of great peril, and her triumph is achieved by her sensuality" (par. 32). Silko states that courage, harmony, and sensuality are beautiful qualities "of the spirit," and implies that all women have them, and are all therefore beautiful (par 32).

How does the title of this essay relate to paragraphs 26–32?

- 💬 The title of this essay, "Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit," is given complete meaning in the final paragraphs. Silko states that beauty has to do with internal qualities as well as the actions one takes. She uses Yellow Woman as an example of how this beauty looks in the world and, therefore, completes her definition of beauty: a beauty "of passion" and "strength" (par. 26), as well as "fearless sensuality" (par. 27) and "courage" (par. 32). In the end, Silko is primarily concerned not with physical beauty but with "a beauty of the spirit": passion, strength, courage, and sensuality.

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 how Silko uses and refines the meaning of the term *beauty* over the course of the text.

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

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

Analyze how Silko provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

① Consider drawing students' attention to their work with W.11-12.3.e as they analyze Silko's conclusion.

In addition, instruct students to look over their notes and annotations in preparation for the End-of-Unit Assessment.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

For homework, respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

Analyze how Silko provides a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

In addition, look over your notes and annotations in preparation for the End-of-Unit Assessment.