

11.2.1

Lesson 2

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze paragraphs 1 and 2 of “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” from *The Souls of Black Folk* (from “Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question” to “but shut out from their world by a vast veil”). In this excerpt, Du Bois writes of the “strange experience” of “being a problem” in America (par. 2). Students analyze how Du Bois introduces ideas, and consider how these ideas interact and develop over the course of this excerpt. Additionally, students are introduced to the Ideas Tracking Tool, which they use throughout this unit to record how Du Bois unfolds a complex series of ideas throughout his essay. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Analyze how two ideas interact and develop over the course of this excerpt.

For homework, students reread this lesson’s excerpt, and use the Ideas Tracking Tool to track at least two key ideas that have emerged in the text thus far. Additionally, students preview the remainder of paragraph 2, box any unfamiliar words, and look up their definitions.

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.11-12.9.b	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>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]”).</p>
L.11-12.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

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 two ideas interact and develop over the course of this excerpt.
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine two ideas that Du Bois introduces over the course of this excerpt (e.g., other people see Du Bois as “a problem” (par. 1–2), and there is an “other world” (par. 1) from which Du Bois is separated). Analyze how these two ideas interact and develop over the course of this excerpt (e.g., These two ideas interact and develop in Du Bois’s story of a young girl who excludes him from a childhood game by absolutely “refus[ing]” to accept his visiting-card (par. 2). This story connects the ideas of feeling like “a problem” (par. 1–2) and “the other world” (par. 1), because it explains how being excluded, or “shut out from their world by a vast veil” (par. 2) makes Du Bois feel “different from the others” (par. 2). This realization that he is different makes Du Bois understand that other people see him as someone who does not belong in their world, or as “a problem” (par. 1–2).).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rollicking (adj.) – carefree and joyous peremptorily (adv.) – acting with the insulting attitude of a person who thinks that he or she should be obeyed without question mayhap (adv.) – perhaps
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> revelation (n.) – a usually secret or surprising fact that is made known
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> peculiar (adj.) – strange; queer; odd wee (adj.) – very small visiting-cards (n.) – small cards presented when visiting that bear the name and sometimes the address of the visitor

- merry (adj.) – very happy and cheerful
- dawned (v.) – began to be understood
- veil (n.) – something that covers or hides something else

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RI.11-12.3, W.11-12.9.b, L.11-12.5 Text: <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> by W.E.B. Du Bois, Chapter 1: “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” paragraphs 1–2 Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Masterful Reading 4. Reading and Discussion 5. Quick Write 6. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 15% 3. 5% 4. 55% 5. 10% 6. 10%

Materials

- Copies of the Ideas Tracking Tool for each student
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 11.2.1 Lesson 1)

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
No symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
►	Indicates student action(s).
💬	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
❗	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and assessed standard for this lesson: RI.11-12.3. In this lesson, students determine ideas in the first two paragraphs of “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” and explore how these ideas interact and develop over the course of this excerpt. Additionally, for homework, students begin tracking these key ideas using an Ideas Tracking Tool.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

① Students were introduced to RI.11-12.3 in 11.1.3 Lesson 4.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to form pairs and discuss two or three of the annotations that they made for the previous lesson’s homework. (Reread and annotate paragraph 1 and preview and annotate the first half of paragraph 2. Box any unfamiliar words in the first half of paragraph 2 and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.)

- ▶ Students share two or three of their annotations in pairs.

💬 Student annotations may include:

- A star next to “How does it feel to be a problem?” (par. 1), noting that other people consider Du Bois to be a problem.
- Stars next to “being a problem is a strange experience” and “it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others; or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing, but shut out from their world by a vast veil” (par. 2), noting Du Bois is seen as a problem because something about him is not the same as those who see him this way.
- A question mark next to “or like, mayhap, in heart and life and longing” (par. 2). What does it mean to be like someone “in heart” (par. 2)? Is “heart” being used figuratively in this sentence?
- An exclamation point next to “one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card,— peremptorily, with a glance” and “it dawned upon me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others” (par. 2). The interaction between this girl and the author makes the author realize that he is “different” (par. 2).

① This annotation exercise supports students’ engagement with W.11-12.9.b, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.

Instruct students to share any vocabulary words they identified and defined in the previous lesson's homework.

💬 Students may identify the following words: *rollicking*, *peremptorily*, *mayhap*.

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

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Instruct students to take out and review their initial reactions and questions from the masterful reading in 11.2.1 Lesson 1. Have students listen to a masterful reading of paragraphs 1–2 (from “Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question” to “but shut out from their world by a vast veil”).

▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students throughout this lesson:

What ideas does Du Bois introduce in this excerpt?

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

55%

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 from “Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question” to “I answer seldom a word” (par. 1), and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

What is the significance of Du Bois’s choice to begin the chapter with the word “[b]etween” (par. 1)?

💬 Du Bois’s choice to use the word “[b]etween” (par. 1) to begin this chapter creates the sense that this “unasked question” (par. 1) separates Du Bois from “the other world” (par. 1). The choice of the word “[b]etween” reinforces the idea that there is a distance between Du Bois and the “others” (par. 1).

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with this analysis, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

What lies “between” Du Bois and “the other world” (par. 1)?

- 💬 The “unasked question ... [h]ow does it feel to be a problem?” (par. 1) lies between Du Bois and “the other world” (par. 1). This suggests that Du Bois is separated from others by something that they want to ask him, but feel that they cannot say.

How does the statement “I know an excellent colored man in my town” (par. 1) develop the relationship between Du Bois and “the other world” (par. 1)?

- 💬 Student responses may include:
- When “others” say they “know” a “colored man” (par. 1), it suggests that they do not identify as African Americans. This statement also implies that “others” (par. 1) assume Du Bois will find this news interesting or significant in some way, perhaps because he is African American. This statement establishes a separation based on race between Du Bois and those who speak to him.
 - The focus on the “colored man” (par. 1) in this statement suggests that race is important in Du Bois’s life, and in the lives of those with whom he interacts. This emphasis indicates that the line that divides Du Bois from those who approach him “half-hesitant[ly]” (par. 1) is related to race.
 - The word “excellent” in the phrase “I know an excellent colored man” (par. 1) suggests that “others” (par. 1) feel they need to tell Du Bois that they have positive feelings about African Americans. This suggests that others think Du Bois will appreciate hearing about their high regard for African Americans, or they think it will make him feel more comfortable to know this.

Based on what people say and ask “instead” (par. 1), what might be the topic of the “unasked question” (par. 1)?

- 💬 People say “I know an excellent colored man,” “I fought at Mechanicsville” or “[d]o not these Southern outrages make your blood boil?” (par. 1) rather than asking the “real question, How does it feel to be a problem?” (par. 1). All of the questions or comments that people ask or say “instead” (par. 1) have something to do with the South, African Americans, or race relations. This suggests that the “real question” (par. 1) had to do with these topics as well.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with this analysis, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

What relationship does Du Bois describe between himself and the “other world” in the first paragraph?

- 💬 Student responses may include:
- In the first sentence of the chapter, Du Bois uses the word “between” (par. 1) to explain that he is separated from “the other world” by an “unasked question” (par. 1). This unasked

question, “[h]ow does it feel to be a problem?” (par. 1), develops the idea that the separation between Du Bois and “the other world” (par. 1) is the result of others seeing Du Bois as an issue, or being confused or troubled by him.

- Du Bois describes the “others” as “flutter[ing] round” the question, “half-hesitant,” and “eye[ing] [him] curiously or compassionately” (par. 1). This develops the idea of an uneasy or insecure relationship between the author and other people. This description also develops the idea that something about Du Bois evokes feelings of interest or sympathy in “others” (par. 1).
- The questions that people from “the other world” (par. 1) ask Du Bois, instead of the “unasked question,” create a distance between Du Bois and “others” (par. 1). The fact that “others” (par. 1) feel the need to tell Du Bois that they know an “excellent” African American (par. 1), and that “Southern outrages” (par. 1) make them angry, reveals that those who approach Du Bois feel the need to be outwardly sympathetic or kind to him, even though they really see him as “a problem” (par. 1).

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students have already made a clear connection between Du Bois’s identity as an African American and others’ perception of him as “a problem” (par. 1), consider providing the following optional extension question to deepen students’ understanding:

How might the topic of the “unasked question” (par. 1) develop your understanding of what Du Bois means by the “other world” (par. 1)?

- 💬 Since the separation between Du Bois and those who want to ask the question (par. 1) has to do with race, the term “the other world” (par. 1) could refer to white people.

Identify a central idea introduced in the first paragraph.

- 💬 Student responses may include:
- Du Bois understands himself as separate from an “other world” (par. 1).
 - Other people perceive Du Bois as “a problem” (par. 1).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to read from “And yet, being a problem is a strange experience” to “but shut out from their world by a vast veil” (par. 2), and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *peculiar* means “strange; queer; odd,” *wee* means “very small,” *visiting-cards* means “small cards presented when visiting that bear the name and sometimes the address of the visitor,” *merry* means “very

happy and cheerful,” *dawned* means “began to be understood,” and *veil* means “something that covers or hides something else.”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *peculiar*, *wee*, *visiting-cards*, *merry*, *dawned*, and *veil* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing the following scaffolding question to support students’ independent reading:

What words and phrases indicate when the events of this passage occur?

💬 Student responses may include:

- The phrase “in the early days of rollicking boyhood” (par. 2) indicates that the events of this passage occur when Du Bois is a child.
- The phrase “I remember well” (par. 2) indicates that Du Bois is remembering what happened to him in the past.
- The phrase “I was a little thing” (par. 2) suggests that the events of this passage occur when Du Bois is very small, perhaps a young child.
- The reference to the “wee wooden schoolhouse” (par. 2) indicates that the events in this story happen when Du Bois is of an age to attend school.

According to Du Bois, “[h]ow does it feel to be a problem” (par. 1)? Why has he “never been anything else” (par. 2)?

- 💬 Du Bois describes the experience of “being a problem” as “strange” and “peculiar” (par. 2). Du Bois’s statement that he “has never been anything else” (par. 2) suggests that he was born “a problem” (par. 2), reinforcing the idea that being a problem has to do with some aspect of Du Bois’s identity that he cannot change.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing the following optional extension question to deepen students’ understanding of Du Bois’s use of “problem” in paragraph 2:

How does Du Bois’s statement “save perhaps in babyhood and in Europe” (par. 2) develop the nature of the “problem” (par. 2)?

- 💬 Du Bois’s statement that one might not be a problem “in babyhood” (par. 2) suggests that being a problem is something that affects one later on in life. His statement that one might not be a problem “in Europe” (par. 2) suggests that being a problem has to do with location, in this case, America.

How does the imagery in paragraph 2 convey the meaning of *revelation*?

🗨 Du Bois describes his revelation as “burst[ing] upon one, all in a day” (par. 2) and as a “shadow” that “swept across” him (par. 2). This imagery suggests that a revelation is a thought or idea that comes all at once, and is a surprise. The image of a “shadow” (par. 2) suggests that this surprise is not necessarily positive.

- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their work with L.11-12.5, as they demonstrate understanding of figurative language in order to illuminate the nuances in word meanings.
- ① Students were introduced to *imagery* in 11.1.2. If necessary, remind students that *imagery* is an author’s use of vivid, descriptive language that appeals to the senses. Imagery is a type of figurative language.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing the following optional extension questions to deepen students’ understanding of “the revelation” (par. 2) in this passage:

Who experiences “the revelation” (par. 2)? When does this experience occur?

🗨 Du Bois describes that the “shadow swept across [him]” (par. 2), indicating that Du Bois is describing his own experience of revelation. This “revelation” (par. 2) occurs when the author is a child, in the “early days of rollicking boyhood” (par. 2).

What is the cumulative effect of the imagery in paragraph 2 on the tone of this passage?

🗨 The image of the revelation “bursting upon” Du Bois creates a tone of surprise in the passage, because it makes the revelation seem unexpected and sudden, while the description of the revelation as a “shadow” that “swept across” (par. 2) Du Bois creates the sense of foreboding, because it makes the revelation seem dark and ominous.

Summarize the series of events described in this section of paragraph 2.

🗨 During a happy exchange of visiting-cards at the school Du Bois attended as a boy, a girl “refused” to accept Du Bois’s card (par. 2). This event led Du Bois to the realization that he “was different from the others” (par. 2).

How does Du Bois’s statement that he is “like” the “others” (par. 2) further develop his relationship with them?

🗨 Du Bois’s statement that he is “like” other people “in heart and life and longing” (par. 2) suggests that he feels that he shares several important aspects in common with those who exclude him; he is like them in what he wants or “long[s]” for (par. 2), and what he loves or believes in his “heart” (par. 2).

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with this analysis, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

How is the word “like” used in the sentence beginning “then it dawned upon me” (par. 2)? How do you know?

- The word “different” (par. 2) is placed in contrast with the word “like” (par. 2), indicating that “like” (par. 2) is being used to mean “alike” in this sentence.

What has “dawned upon” (par. 2) Du Bois?

- Du Bois realizes that although he shares very important beliefs and desires with “the others” (par. 2), they treat him differently and exclude him. He is “shut out from their world by a vast veil” (par. 2).

What does the word “peremptorily” (par. 2) suggest about the nature of the girl’s refusal?

- Du Bois’s choice to use the word “peremptorily” (par. 2) in his description of the girl’s refusal suggests that she made her decision with an insulting attitude, assuming that Du Bois would obey her refusal without question.

What does Du Bois’s description of the girl’s refusal suggest about the feelings that caused his revelation?

- Du Bois’s choice of the word “peremptorily” (par. 2) suggests that his revelation came as a result of experiencing a feeling of powerlessness in the face of a judgment that allowed no room for him to protest.

How do the interactions between Du Bois and “others” in paragraphs 1 and 2 develop the idea of “a vast veil” (par. 2)?

- Student responses may include:
 - In the first paragraph, “others” do not know how to approach Du Bois or speak to him, they are “half-hesitant” and “curious” of him and consider him to be “a problem” (par. 1), which makes him feel separate or different from them. These interactions suggest that the “vast veil” (par. 2) that separates Du Bois and the “other world” (par. 1) is connected to the race-related question: “How does it feel to be a problem?” (par. 1); both the question, “How does it feel to be a problem?” (par. 1), and the “veil” “shut” (par. 2) Du Bois out, or exclude him, from the “other world” (par. 1).
 - Du Bois’s interaction with the girl, who turned down his card “peremptorily, with a glance” in paragraph 2, suggests that the image of the “vast veil” that “shuts [him] out” (par. 2) from her world is another way of describing her insulting and decisive refusal to be friendly with him. The girl’s choice to ignore and be cruel to Du Bois prevents him from participating in this school activity, and isolates him. Therefore, the “vast veil” (par. 2) is a metaphor for actions and behaviors, like that of the little girl, which exclude Du Bois.

- ① Consider asking students to identify what figure of speech a “vast veil” (par. 2) is. Students are familiar with metaphors from their work in 11.1.2 Lesson 6. Consider reminding students that a *metaphor* is a type of figurative language used to show or create a similarity between ideas or things that seem to be unrelated. Students continue work with this metaphor in the following lesson.
- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to their work with L.11-12.5, as they demonstrate their understanding of figurative language and nuances in word meanings.

How do the events that Du Bois describes in paragraph 2 further develop ideas introduced in paragraph 1?

💬 Student responses may include:

- The “tall newcomer[’s]” (par. 2) rejection of Du Bois’s card develops the idea that Du Bois feels that others see him as “a problem” (par. 2), because the girl’s refusal of his card marks him as different from everyone else.
- The girl’s refusal of Du Bois’s “visiting-card” (par. 2) develops the idea that Du Bois is separated from others and the “other world” (par. 1) that they live in, because this experience of being excluded leads him to the revelation that he is “shut out” (par. 2) from the “other world” (par. 1) by “a vast veil” (par. 2), because there is something “different” (par. 2) about him.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 5: Quick Write

10%

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

Analyze how two ideas interact and develop over the course of this excerpt.

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Instruct students to use this lesson’s vocabulary whenever 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 6: Closing

10%

Display and distribute the homework assignment, including the Ideas Tracking Tool. Instruct students to reread this lesson's excerpt (from "Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question" to "but shut out from their world by a vast veil"), and use the Ideas Tracking Tool to track what ideas emerge in the text and where they emerge. Students should record at least two ideas introduced and developed in paragraphs 1–2, as well as notes and connections for each.

Additionally, instruct students to preview the remainder of paragraph 2 of "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" (from "I had thereafter no desire to tear down" to "watch the streak of blue above"). Direct students to box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Instruct them to choose the definition that makes the most sense in context and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.

► Students follow along.

- ① Students were introduced to a similar tool in 10.2.1, Lesson 5. If students require additional support working with this tool, consider modeling one row of the tool as a class (see the Model Ideas Tracking Tool in 11.2.1 Lesson 3).
- ① Students add to the Ideas Tracking Tool throughout this module for all texts, and reference it for assessments.

Homework

Reread this lesson's excerpt (from "Between me and the other world there is ever an unasked question" to "but shut out from their world by a vast veil"), and use the Ideas Tracking Tool to track at least two ideas that emerge in paragraphs 1–2, as well as notes and connections for each.

Additionally, preview the remainder of paragraph 2 of "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" (from "I had thereafter no desire to tear down" to "watch the streak of blue above"). Box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.

Ideas Tracking Tool

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

Text:	
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Paragraph #	Ideas	Notes and Connections