

11.2.1

Lesson 15

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze paragraphs 13–14 of “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” from *The Souls of Black Folk* (from “Merely a concrete test of the underlying principles” to “listen to the striving in the souls of black folk”). Students analyze how the final two paragraphs of the text relate to each other and how they serve as an effective conclusion of the chapter. Students engage in a collaborative discussion about Du Bois’s purpose for writing the chapter and how he refines a central idea in the final two paragraphs. Additionally, students revise a Quick Write assessment from a previous lesson, integrating writing skills learned in previous lessons. For the lesson assessment, students revise their Quick Write responses from either Lesson 13 or Lesson 14, based on the following prompt: Expand and develop your Quick Write response from either Lesson 13 or 14 by refining your evidence selection or adding more significant and relevant evidence, and incorporate appropriate and varied transitions to link ideas and create cohesion.

For homework, students continue to read their AIR texts and prepare for a brief discussion on how they applied the focus standard of their choice to their texts.

Standards

| Assessed Standard(s) | |
|----------------------|--|
| W.11-12.2.b, c | <p>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</p> <p>b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.</p> <p>c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.</p> |
| 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. |

| 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> |

Assessment

| Assessment(s) |
|--|
| <p>Student learning is assessed via a writing revision activity. Students revise their Quick Write responses from either Lesson 13 or Lesson 14, based on the following prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand and develop your Quick Write response from either Lesson 13 or 14 by refining your evidence selection or adding more significant and relevant evidence, and incorporate appropriate and varied transitions to link ideas and create cohesion. <p>① Students’ written responses will be evaluated using the relevant portions of the 11.2.1 End-of-Unit Text Analysis Rubric and Checklist (W.11-12.2.b and W.1-12.2.c).</p> |
| High Performance Response(s) |
| <p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refine and develop the original Quick Write by using linking words and phrases to connect ideas, create cohesion, and clarify relationships among complex ideas and concepts (see example below). Refine and develop the original Quick Write by using appropriate and varied transitions and syntax (different sentence structures, sentence lengths, punctuation, etc.) to link the major ideas of the text and create cohesion (see example below). Refine and develop the original Quick Write by selecting the most significant and relevant evidence, including extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples (see example below). <p>The High Performance Response is a revised version of the High Performance Response from the Lesson 13 Quick Write. Both the original Quick Write and the revised High Performance Response are included below:</p> <p>Original High Performance Response from Lesson 13:</p> |

- Du Bois uses words like *breed*, *diseased*, *dying*, and *suicide* (par. 11) to describe the potentially rapid decline of his race in “[t]he facing of so vast a prejudice” (par. 11). Repeatedly using words associated with sickness and death contributes to the power of the text by reminding readers of the destructive effects of prejudice.
- This section of the text explores the self-doubt that prejudice causes African Americans to feel about their intelligence and their abilities. Du Bois’s assertion that this self-doubt is so damaging that it will lead to the “suicide of [the] race” (par. 11) contributes to the power of this paragraph because it highlights the severity of the effects of prejudice on African Americans, while simultaneously encouraging African Americans to continue to pursue education and “social responsibilities” despite the criticism of “the Nation” (par. 11).

Revised High Performance Response:

- Du Bois’s stylistic choice to describe the effect of “prejudice” (par. 11) toward African Americans through words associated with sickness and death such as *diseased*, *dying*, and *suicide* (par. 11) contributes to the power of the text by reminding readers of the destructive effects of prejudice. Du Bois reinforces this association through his biblical allusion to the “four winds” (par. 11) that precede destruction or doom. This allusion suggests that the “atmosphere of contempt and hate” born from prejudice signals enormous devastation for African Americans.
- Du Bois’s content choices also contribute to the power of his text. Du Bois asserts that prejudice is so severely damaging that it could result in the “suicide of [the] race” (par. 11) or the end of a strong African American identity. This statement contributes to the power of this paragraph, because it highlights the ability of prejudice to slowly destroy the self-worth of African Americans, who are told through white Americans’ “contempt and hate” (par. 11) that they must “be content to be servants, and nothing more” (par. 11). Although a powerful warning, this statement is also a powerful call to action, because it encourages African Americans to continue to pursue education and “social responsibilities,” despite the criticism of “the Nation” (par. 11).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- concrete (adj.) – constituting an actual thing or instance; real
- may (aux. v.) – used to express ability

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

- travail (n.) – painfully difficult or burdensome work

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

- underlying (adj.) – used to identify the idea, cause, problem, etc., that forms the basis of something

Lesson Agenda/Overview

| Student-Facing Agenda | % of Lesson |
|---|---|
| Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: W.11-12.2.b, c; W.11-12.5; W.11-12.9.b Text: <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> by W.E.B. Du Bois, Chapter 1: “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” paragraphs 13–14 Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Masterful Reading Reading and Discussion Writing Revision and Assessment Closing | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 10% 5% 35% 40% 5% |

Materials

- Student copies of the 11.2.1 End-of-Unit Text Analysis Rubric and Checklist (refer to 11.2.1 Lesson 5)
- Student copies of the Connecting Ideas Handout (refer to 11.2.1 Lesson 13)

Learning Sequence

| How to Use the Learning Sequence | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Symbol | Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol |
| 10% | Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take. |
| no symbol | Plain text indicates teacher action. |
| | Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students. |
| | <i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i> |
| ► | Indicates student action(s). |
| 💬 | Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions. |
| ① | Indicates instructional notes for the teacher. |

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standards for this lesson: W.11-12.2.b, c and W.11-12.5. In this lesson, students read paragraphs 13 and 14 of “Of Our Spiritual Strivings.” Students focus on how Du Bois concludes the chapter as they analyze his purpose for writing and how he refines a central idea. Students then revisit their writing instruction from previous lessons and revise a Quick Write response, refining their selection of the most significant and relevant evidence and using appropriate and varied transitions (W.11-12.2.b and W.11-12.2.c).

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied a focus standard to their AIR texts. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson’s AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied their focus standard to their AIR texts.

- ▶ Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied their focus standard to their AIR texts from the previous lesson’s homework.

Instruct students to take out their responses to Lesson 14’s homework assignment. (Reread paragraph 12 and add at least two new or refined ideas to your Ideas Tracking Tool.) Instruct students to form pairs to share the additions they made to their Ideas Tracking Tools.

- 💬 See the Model Ideas Tracking Tool at the end of this lesson.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of paragraphs 13–14 from “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” (from “Merely a concrete test of the underlying principles” to “listen to the striving in the souls of black folk”). Instruct students to listen for how Du Bois concludes the chapter.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

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

Which key words or ideas does Du Bois return to in the final paragraphs of this chapter?

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

35%

Instruct students to form small groups. 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.

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

Instruct student groups to read from “Merely a concrete test of the underlying principles” to “and in the name of human opportunity.” (par. 13) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definition: *concrete* means “constituting an actual thing or instance; real.”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *concrete* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Provide students with the following definition: *underlying* is used to identify the idea, cause, problem, etc., that forms the basis of something.

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

What might be the “underlying principles” to which Du Bois refers in paragraph 13? How do these principles connect to ideas discussed in paragraph 12?

- ☛ The “principles” are described as those *underlying* “the great republic” (par. 13), or America, and refer to principles or laws outlined in documents like *The Declaration of Independence*, which guarantees and protects freedom and liberty for all individuals. Du Bois connects the “principles” in paragraph 13 to the “ideals of the American Republic” in paragraph 12.

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

What is “the great republic” (par. 13)?

- ☛ “[T]he great republic” (par. 13) is the United States of America.

How might “the Negro Problem” be “a concrete test” of the principles of “the great republic” (par. 13)?

- ☛ Student responses may include:
 - “[T]he Negro Problem” is “a concrete test” of America’s “principles” (par. 13) because the way African Americans are treated does not match the core beliefs and values of “the great republic” (par. 13), such as justice and liberty for all men.

- In paragraph 6, “the Negro Problem” (par. 13) is America’s “vastest social problem” (par. 6). Because issues facing America are attributed solely to African Americans and seen as a “Negro Problem” (par. 13) instead of as a social problem, America continues its prejudice and separation of African Americans. The continued separation and oppression of African Americans tests America’s “underlying principles” (par. 13) of liberty and justice for all.

① Explain to students that “the freedmen’s sons” (par. 13) refers to the children of slaves freed by the 13th Amendment, or Emancipation. They were not personally freed from slavery, but they were born into freedom.

How do the words and phrases that Du Bois uses to explain “the spiritual striving” (par. 13) further develop this experience?

- ☞ Du Bois uses words and phrases like “travail of souls,” “burden,” “almost beyond the measure of their strength,” and “bear it,” to describe “the spiritual striving” (par. 13) or need for complete liberty. These word choices create a sense that the “striving” (par. 13) is a difficult struggle, because they suggest that the striving is something heavy that African Americans can only carry with extreme difficulty.

How do the words and phrases Du Bois uses to define “the spiritual striving” help convey the meaning of *travail* in this context?

- ☞ Du Bois describes the “souls” of African Americans as bearing a “burden” that “is almost beyond the measure of their strength” (par. 13). Therefore, *travail* means painfully difficult or burdensome work.

Why is the “burden” not “beyond the measure of their strength” (par. 13)?

- ☞ Du Bois suggests that African Americans are able to “bear” the “burden” of their “striving” (par. 13) because they derive strength from their racial identity as “Negro[es],” their identity as Americans (“the land of their fathers’ fathers”), and “in the name of human opportunity” (par. 13), which speaks to “the greater ideals of the American Republic” or “human brotherhood” (par. 12).

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider encouraging students to make connections across the text with the following question:

How does the description of the “strength” (par. 13) of African Americans connect to ideas in paragraphs 3 and 10?

☞ Student responses should include:

- This description of the strength of African Americans connects to paragraph 3, in which Du Bois writes that African Americans are able to withstand the internal conflict of double-

consciousness only because their “dogged strength” prevents them “from being torn asunder.”

- This description of African Americans’ strength connects to paragraph 10, in which Du Bois describes how African Americans are able to withstand the “systematic humiliation” of prejudice “that would disarm and discourage” anyone but them.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to read from “And now what I have briefly sketched” to “listen to the striving in the souls of black folk” (par. 14) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definition: *may* is used to express ability.

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

Who are the “men” that “may listen to the striving in the souls of black folk” (par. 14)?

💬 Student responses may include:

- The “men” (par. 14) that Du Bois refers to could be white Americans or “the other world” (par. 12), who have not understood or seen African American struggles, or who have mistreated African Americans and ignored their struggles.
- The “men” (par. 14) that Du Bois refers to could also be African Americans who have lived through the struggles and suffering, and “whose burden is almost beyond the measure of their strength” (par. 13). Du Bois offers these men guidance and encouragement. By listening, these men “may” (par. 14) gain strength, courage, and company in their fight for an equal place in America.

What is Du Bois’s purpose for writing “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”?

- 💬 Du Bois’s purpose is to encourage all Americans to start working towards the “ideal of human brotherhood,” which is “gained through the unifying ideal of Race” (par. 12). Du Bois attempts to foster an appreciation of “the traits and talents” of African Americans, so “that some day on American soil” (par. 12) the different races can interact in a positive manner that does not deny either their respective identities or true self-consciousness.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 5: Writing Revision and Assessment

40%

Distribute students' Quick Write responses from Lessons 13 and 14. Explain that students revise one of their Quick Write responses (from either Lesson 13 or 14) during this lesson. Ask students to briefly review their responses.

- ▶ Students examine their Lesson 13 and 14 Quick Write responses in preparation for the lesson assessment.

Ask students to review the relevant portions of the 11.2.1 End-of-Unit Text Analysis Rubric and Checklist and share how to develop and revise their writing based on the skills outlined in W.11-12.2.b and W.11-12.2.c.

☞ Student responses may include:

- Responses should use the most significant and relevant evidence, details, quotations, or examples to develop a topic.
- Responses should link ideas with varying sentence length, sentence structure, and punctuation to create cohesion.
- Responses should use linking words and phrases to connect major sections of the text and clarify relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

① Students worked with W.11-12.2.b in 11.2.1 Lesson 5 and W.11-12.2.c in 11.2.1 Lesson 13.

Post or project standard W.11-12.5 and facilitate a brief whole-class discussion on the following questions:

What does it mean to “revise” writing?

- ☞ To revise writing means to improve or strengthen writing.

What should writers do in the revision process?

- ☞ Writers should revise for a specific purpose or set of purposes, such as to correct errors, include more significant or relevant evidence, create links between ideas, or address specific feedback from a reviewer.

① Students were introduced to W.11-12.5 in 11.1.1 Lesson 4.

Instruct students to annotate their Quick Write responses to identify places in their writing that might be strengthened by the addition or refinement of evidence and places where transitions might improve cohesion and clarity (W.11-12.2.b and W.11-12.2.c). Instruct students to consider how they might strengthen or revise their responses accordingly.

- ▶ Students annotate their own Quick Write responses.
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Instruct students to respond in writing to the following prompt:

Expand and develop your Quick Write response from either Lesson 13 or 14 by refining your evidence selection or adding more significant and relevant evidence, and incorporate appropriate and varied transitions to link ideas and create cohesion.

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Remind students to use the relevant portions of the 11.2.1 End-of-Unit Text Analysis 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 students to their independent revisions. Remind students to refer to their Connecting Ideas Handout as they identify “appropriate and varied transitions.”

- ▶ Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.

🗨 See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to continue to read their AIR text through the lens of a focus standard of their choice and prepare for a brief 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Continue reading your AIR text through the lens of a focus standard of your choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.

Model Ideas Tracking Tool

| | | | | | |
|--------------|--|---------------|--|--------------|--|
| Name: | | Class: | | Date: | |
|--------------|--|---------------|--|--------------|--|

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: | "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" from <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> by W.E.B. Du Bois |
|--------------|--|

| Paragraph # | Ideas | Notes and Connections |
|-------------|--|---|
| 12 | Self-consciousness | In paragraph 4, Du Bois describes self-consciousness as the "merg[ing]" of African American's "double self." Du Bois explains that in this process of merging, African Americans will not lose either half of their identity. Rather, this merging depends upon appreciation for both what African Americans contribute to America and what America can "teach" (par. 4) African Americans. This explanation connects to the phrase "fostering and developing the traits and talents of the Negro" (par. 12), because in both cases, Du Bois emphasizes the necessity of encouraging and respecting the unique skills and qualities that African Americans contribute to America. |
| 12 | In order to attain complete liberty, all the past ideals must be sought together | Du Bois establishes that the past ideals of freedom, "political power" (par. 12), and education were useful to progress towards liberty, but "incomplete" (par. 12) by themselves. These ideals need to be combined for "true self-consciousness" (par. 4) to occur. |
| 12 | Human brotherhood | Du Bois refines his idea of liberty by describing it as "human brotherhood" (par. 12), suggesting that complete liberty and freedom require that African Americans and white Americans live together and "give each to each those characteristics both so sadly lack" (par. 12). Du Bois suggests "human brotherhood" (par. 12), or complete liberty, begins in the self-respect and self-knowledge of African Americans. |